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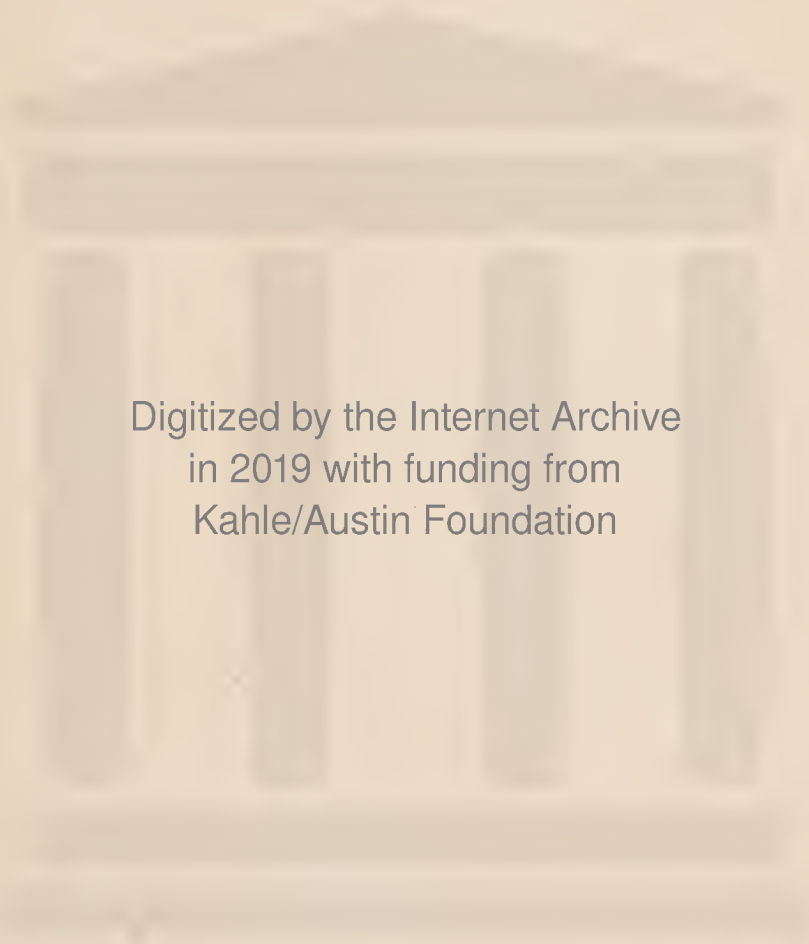

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A CENTURY OF SCOTTISH HISTORY

A CENTURY

OF

SCOTTISH HISTORY

FROM THE DAYS BEFORE THE '45
TO THOSE WITHIN LIVING MEMORY

BY

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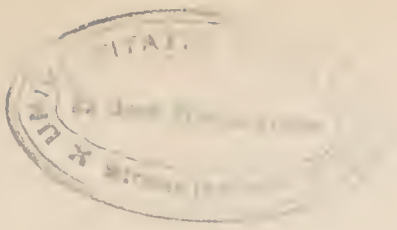


A CENTURY OF SCOTTISH HISTORY.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES.

It would be a complete mistake to fancy that Scotland during these years was occupied exclusively with disputes as to ecclesiastical government, or even with arranging the terms on which she was to live with that partner whose predominance was sometimes asserted with brutal and irritating bluntness. On the contrary, she was in the throes of a very acute period of economical transition, with the usual disturbances that such a transition brings in its wake. With no lack of energy, she was striving to cope with a new state of matters in her own borders. What is most characteristic of the nation in these years is the growing prevalence of a public spirit, interested in the development of her institutions, not unwilling to remove abuses, and prepared generously to extend the benefits of her rapidly increasing prosperity to those regions which but a few years before had been beyond the range of her law and her police.

To begin with the capital, we have already alluded

to the scheme for extending her boundaries beyond the narrow ridge which ran between Holyrood and the Castle. The scheme had long been afoot. Even so early as the beginning of the century it had been a favourite object with the Earl of Mar, whose influence ended with the ill-fated attempt of 1715. Since then it had been revived. New powers, which encountered much opposition from those whose more precise notions of the rights of proprietorship were shocked by them, were given to the authorities of the city for the prosecution of the work; and even powers of compulsory purchase, which seemed to be a violent and socialistic innovation, had been obtained. The best engineering skill which could be secured was employed upon the task; but alas! in the first instance, with dismal failure. Possibly the business arrangements of the unreformed Corporation (washed down as these always were by copious libations) were not exactly of a kind to secure the most sound and honest workmanship. The foundations of the structure were scamped. Scarcely had the first span of the bridge been constructed before the piers were found to be insecure; and new expenses, which then seemed enormous, but now-a-days would seem trifling to a petty provincial town, had to be faced. But there was enough of public spirit to push the scheme; and Edinburgh began to develop from the huddled crowd of dwellings which had been her limit for centuries, into a spacious, luxurious, and dignified modern city. She lost, indeed, some of her old picturesqueness, and the miserable taste of the day threw away a splendid opportunity in rectangular streets of a monotonous architecture, which banished all the diversity and beauty that might have been

gained by preserving some of the trees which were ruthlessly destroyed. But the extension of the city did at least provide for decent sanitation, and for a life in which some attention was paid to the embellishments of modern civilisation.

Another project of material improvement, more extended in its range, was that of a navigable canal from the Forth to the Clyde. When first mooted, this seemed a chimerical design; and to increase the difficulties of the promoters divergent views as to its size and direction soon appeared. Some proposed a small canal which should join the Forth at Carron, and lead direct to Glasgow. Its object was to open a ready access from the eastern seaboard to the Glasgow market, and the promoters were chiefly Glasgow merchants. The estimated cost was £40,000. Over a sum which would scarcely cover the transactions of a day in a hundred merchants' offices in Glasgow at our own time, the whole of the west of Scotland was keenly excited. The other scheme, for a much larger canal, which would be navigable for sea-going vessels, and was to join the Clyde, not at Glasgow, but at Dumbarton, was chiefly promoted by the Board of Manufactures. This scheme, it was argued, was alone worthy of Scotland; but the public mind was staggered at the estimated cost, which was no less than £80,000! The bolder spirits were not daunted by this cost, great as it might seem. If the project were to be carried out, let it be done once for all on a scale that would satisfy posterity. Why should Glasgow only, and not all Scotland, benefit? With equal energy it was maintained on the other side that Glasgow's commercial interests were something to be weighed even against the amenities of Edinburgh. A practical and possible

scheme should be proceeded with, even although the fashionable world of Edinburgh should not have a broad and magnificent canal upon whose banks they might construct an ornamental promenade. To indulge vain hopes of a scheme which involved impossible expenditure would only be to postpone indefinitely a feasible project of high commercial promise. The matter came to be a struggle between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and abundant floods of rhetoric, of argument, and of sarcasm were poured forth on either side. If it were only as an early symptom of the growing jealousy between the East and the West the dispute would be of interest. Eventually a compromise was arranged. The large canal was undertaken, and although it was to debouch at Dumbarton, a branch canal was to open an easy access to Glasgow. The estimate for this was £100,000; but so far did the resources of Scotland even then exceed her own calculations, that a larger ultimate cost was found to be no crushing burden. The whole story illustrates how the commercial importance of the country was then passing through the day of small things. It is only such incidents that enable us to realise the difference that a century has made.

Other schemes were on foot for increasing the facilities for transit. Up to the beginning of last century roads were few and ill constructed. Since the rebellions of 1715 and 1745 Government had been busy in constructing the great military roads that were to open up the Highlands. Partly from Jacobite disaffection, which saw in these roads a strategic movement fatal to their hopes, and partly, also, from simple obstinate attachment to old habits, the districts chiefly affected viewed these efforts with disgust. But their

advantages forced themselves on attention, and the opposition died away. Every country now saw the urgent need of decent roads, but the only method by which this could be secured was the clumsy one of exacting six days of statutory labour due annually from every tenant. The burden was heavy: it was unequal: and it produced poor results. The bolder spirits were now advocating a road assessment, and their proposal was making way.

Besides material improvements, the time was also marked by commercial activity. and by the study of the conditions under which that was possible. No branch of this was more important than the banking system. Its history in Scotland is so peculiar that it merits some notice even in a general history of the country. It shows the national characteristics in their most pronounced form.

It is curious that the first legislative recognition of banking is almost synchronous in England and in Scotland. It was in 1694 that the Bank of England was established: the Act of the Scots Parliament establishing the Bank of Scotland was passed in 1695. Oddly enough, the chief founder of the Bank of England was William Paterson, a Scotsman who was the prime mover in the ill-fated Darien scheme: the foremost in forming the constitution of the Bank of Scotland was one Holland, an English merchant. But after the first start was given each nation assumed and maintained the exclusive management of its own concern.

Except for almost simultaneous origin, the two schemes were as different as they well could be. The wealth of England was already great. The financiers of London could make their own terms with Govern-

ment, whose exigencies they met, and from whom they obtained in return a monopoly which shaped the future system of English banking, and to which critics of that system ascribe all its artificial restrictions, involving as they did the necessity for the constant intervention of the Legislature. In Scotland the system started as it remained, with few exceptions, for a century and a half, almost entirely unrestricted. The Act of 1695 authorised the formation of the Bank of Scotland and gave to it a monopoly; but that monopoly was not made perpetual, as it subsequently became in England. It was to endure only for twenty-one years. Such limited monopoly was absolutely necessary to secure any chance of success; it was fortunate that it did not last long enough to prevent the free competition which enabled the tender seedling of Scottish financial effort to thrive in a sterile soil.

Its nominal capital was only £1,200,000 Scots, or £100,000 sterling; and even of this moderate amount only £10,000 was paid up, and for several years was amply sufficient to cover the operations. But its power was enormously extended by what became one of its chief functions—the issue of paper money. The circulating medium of Scotland was at that time, as we have seen, something like £600,000 or £800,000 in nominal value, but was seriously depreciated. With such deficient machinery growth in commerce was impossible, and the issue of notes gave to it a much needed extension. As was natural when the laws upon which a paper circulation must be based were little understood, the experiment was hazardous, and difficulties arose even so early as 1704. But Scotland was a small nation, where the credit and the good sense of prominent citizens were readily known and appreciated. The Bank for a time

was obliged to suspend its money payments. But some of the leading citizens examined its financial state and pronounced it sound; and such a certificate was amply sufficient to restore public confidence. The infant enterprise resumed its course strengthened by the lesson which it had received as to the necessity of a bullion reserve. Its success was great, and equally marked was the benefit it brought to a commerce which was only then making its first slow and faltering steps in advance. The profits of the shareholders were large, amounting on an average of nine-and-twenty years to 17 per cent.; but such profits naturally led to competition, and fortunately for Scotland that competition was not prevented by monopoly, as in England. By an Act of 1708 the Bank of England had been effectually secured against any rival by the prohibition of any other company of more than six persons for the purpose of carrying on the business of banking. Joint-stock enterprise was thus shut out from the field, and the only rivals which the Government Bank had thus to meet were the private banks, which could offer only a feeble and ineffectual opposition. Not so in Scotland. There the Bank of Scotland had only its own energies to trust to, and, unfortunately for itself, it became involved in suspicion of Jacobite leanings—proclivities hardly suitable to the unromantic conditions of commercial success—and incurred the disfavour of the Hanoverian Government. Competitors were ready to share its gains, and the proprietors of the Equivalent Stock—Government securities by means of which the payment of a Scottish indemnity for the financial consequences of the Union was guaranteed—obtained in 1727 a charter authorising them to carry on the business of banking under the name of the Royal Bank of Scot-

land. But it must be noticed that although their charter was useful as an authority, it did not confer the power of issuing notes, but only recognised what was an unrestricted right. The charter was a sign of Government patronage, but it was nothing more. The paid-up capital of the new enterprise was only £22,000.

The ensuing year saw a fierce warfare between the two companies, in which each endeavoured to destroy the credit of its rival. Each bought up as far as it could the paper money of the other, and endeavoured to force it to suspension of payment by sudden presentation of the notes. To protect themselves, the pernicious device of an optional clause was introduced, permitting the notes to be payable on demand, or, with a small interest, six months after presentation. It was a necessity for self-preservation, but it eventually forced on the first legislative restriction of banking powers in Scotland. For the present, however, it did not destroy the system. Gradually the folly of an internecine warfare was recognised. Terms were arranged between the rivals, and each was content to tolerate the existence of the other. Meanwhile their rivalry enormously increased the opportunities for commercial enterprise in Scotland, by providing it with the necessary instruments of a currency, which the poverty of the nation would otherwise have rendered impossible, and by permitting the system of cash credits (first adopted in 1729), by means of which brain and energy unprovided with capital were enabled to devote themselves to the improvement of the country, and to develop new openings for trade.

Amidst storm and stress, in spite of unpropitious circumstances, and amidst the disturbing influences of the rebellion of 1745, the system still went on and

prospered, and the field of banking enterprise was shared freely by many private banks, started by men whose recognised credit in the eyes of their countrymen secured the necessary confidence. After the rebellion a new and important rival came into the field in the shape of the British Linen Company, originally formed for the encouragement of the linen industry, but now embracing banking within the range of its operations. The impulse towards improvement of the country and the development of commerce was immensely stimulated. The slow and feeble steps by which former advances had been made were exchanged for bold and rapid strides. Banking increased by the very efforts for which it gave facilities, and its enterprise took more dubious shapes. It seemed as if there could be no bounds to the increase of wealth by the simple expedient of increasing the paper circulation, and making it a more convenient medium. Notes for trifling amounts—frequently for a shilling—were issued, and the optional clauses took a dangerous and pernicious form. They were often made payable in kind as well as in specie, and the issuer pledged himself only to pay "in money or in drink." The currency was thus absolutely debased; and it was no exaggeration which satirised the absurdity by the issue in Glasgow of a note of the Bank of Wasps, with the motto "We swarm," promising to pay on demand "one penny sterling, or, at the option of the Directors, three ballads, six days after demand!"

The freedom which had distinguished Scottish banking, and which had saved it from the galling fetters of monopoly, had been of immense advantage. It had given enormous facilities to a country whose poverty prevented it from reaping the benefit of its energy.

The multiplicity of private banks, great as it was, had not—thanks to the pressure of public opinion and to the national character—led to the dangers which might have been expected. But now it was evident that it had been abused, and that some protection against the abuse was absolutely necessary, unless the system of credit was to break down. The larger banks now pressed for some check upon the scandals which had grown up; and in 1765 the Lord-Advocate Miller was induced to bring in a Bill dealing with the subject. By this any optional clause, either as regards time or mode of payment, upon paper money was prohibited, and no notes were to be issued for less than £1 sterling.

But while this checked the most glaring evils which were threatened from the abuse of the system, it did not secure the country against the dangers involved in the free banking system. The nation was becoming more and more eager in the race for wealth, and it was not unreasonably convinced that great opportunities lay before it. Manufactures were more actively carried on. New openings for commerce were offered by our successful wars. Improved agriculture was a favourite occupation, and seemed likely to redouble the value of the soil. Luxury in living had enormously increased, and the extension of the Scottish metropolis had given rise, with more ample accommodation, to a style of living hitherto unknown. It might well seem that the only requirement was capital, or what might seem to be the same thing as capital, in a circulating medium easily procured. The opportunity for rash and speculative banking was only too tempting.

In these circumstances a new banking enterprise

was undertaken, offering facilities hitherto unknown. A bank was opened at Ayr by a company known as Douglas, Heron & Co. in 1769. It had a large number of subscribers, including some of the greatest names of Scotland, whose credit was based upon vast landed estates. Its nominal capital was £150,000; but that by no means represented the extent of its operations, which altogether dwarfed the scanty beginnings, and cautious advances of the older banks. It offered accommodation on the most easy terms, and it seemed likely to usher in a new era for the smaller landowner, who lacked the capital for the development of his land, and for the penniless adventurer who thought that his brains, if supported by a nominal credit, could open to him a commercial Eldorado. Meanwhile its operations were carried on by an unlimited supply of paper money, which was produced without stint. The engine which in cautious hands had sufficed to raise Scotland from the torpor of poverty was now, under reckless and misguided impulse, hurrying her over a precipice.

It did not take long to work the inevitable ruin. In 1772 the crash came. The bills of the bank were returned, protested, from London, and its credit sank as quickly as it had risen. Its total liabilities were £1,250,000—a sum which, a few years before, it would have seemed impossible for any Scottish credit to have raised. The crash produced widespread distress. Families, whose landed possessions had for generations given them a high position, were irretrievably ruined. The greater part of Ayrshire changed hands. But the disaster was not without its good side. Ruinous as it proved, yet it is satisfactory to find that the liabilities were eventually—only, it is

true, after long years of effort—discharged by the shareholders, and did not fall on the creditors of the bank. The land changed hands, but the stimulus which even ill-based capital had given to its improvement had a lasting effect. It is to the credit of the Scottish banking system that all the larger and older banks, and many of the sounder private banks, weathered the storm with no loss of stability. The national system had grown with the growth of the country, and had been developed by the energy and steadiness of the national character. It had the strength of a national product, and it survived this shock, even although—save for the Act of 1765—it had none of the securities which a restrictive legislation might have given to it. We shall see later how, on at least two occasions, it met critical circumstances by methods of its own, and resisted with indomitable pertinacity the restrictions, founded upon English principles, which the British Parliament sought to impose upon it.[1]

It is important to notice, as an additional sign of commercial enterprise in Scotland, that in the very year when the fall of the Ayr bank occurred, there was an important change in the bankruptcy law of Scotland. Hitherto that law had been singularly unjust, and seemed to be framed with the express purpose of defrauding certain creditors. These had been allowed to reckon by priority of arrestment, and every opportunity had been given for a debtor to make a fraudulent arrangement with a selected creditor, by giving him timely notice, and thus enabling him to secure himself to the prejudice of the rest. The Court of Session had endeavoured to remedy this to some

[1] Viz. the restriction of cash payments in 1797, and the small-note scare in 1826.

extent by ordering that all arrestments within thirty days after bankruptcy should be of equal force. This order of the Court—perhaps of doubtful authority—was now confirmed and extended by Act of Parliament. Had the amendment of the law not taken place, it is obvious that no sound system of commercial credit would have been possible. That it did take place proves that the nation was alive to the necessities of a new state of economical conditions.

But economical changes do not come about without producing serious difficulties, and of these Scotland had her full share. Certain troubles, of which we find a periodical recrudescence in the larger towns during these early years of the reign of George III., are symptomatic of a revolution in the conditions of employment. Up to a date not very far removed, labour at a daily or weekly wage had been almost unknown. Even now, it was very rare in the country districts, and for agricultural employment was practically non-existent. For many years yet to come, the domestic servant in Scotland was a permanent member of the family, with a practical partnership in all the family affairs, and exercising that freedom of speech and action which long familiarity, coupled with indubitable fidelity, necessarily gives. But, at an earlier stage, out-door labour was almost on the same footing. Each estate had its workmen, whose position was handed down from father to son, and who rarely contemplated a change either of habitation or of master. The labourer was not, indeed, attached to the soil by law, but by custom and habit he seldom moved, and formed a member of a household rather than a hired employee. Even in towns this state of things had almost been paralleled up to a recent date. Now it was fast pass-

ing away. The old system gave a raciness and an interest to the earlier phases of Scottish social life which one parts with regretfully; but it could not meet the advancing requirements of trade and manufactures which were to revolutionise the country during the next two generations. Again and again in these years we find ominous symptoms in combinations of labourers in a particular trade, striking for a rise of wages. Such combinations were pounced upon by the law, and met with drastic treatment at the hands of the magistrates. Heavy fines and imprisonment were rigorously dealt out to all who took part in them. They checked the manufacturing prosperity of the town—which was interpreted strictly as the commercial prosperity of the master—and that was enough to procure their condemnation. It had not even dawned on the minds of men that freedom involved the right to dispose of one's labour for the highest price which legitimate combination could extort. But we must not forget that summary discipline in these matters was not confined to workmen. Only a few years before, the brewers of Edinburgh had resolved to close their breweries in consequence of an obnoxious tax. It was deemed no excessive straining of the law when the authorities stepped in to force them to carry on their trade, in order that the lieges might not be deprived of their beer, whether the manufacture was carried on at a loss or not; and strange to say, the brewers resumed their trade, and yet did not find themselves entirely ruined. It is one of the advantages of a paternal government that it can generally distinguish between a fit of sulking and a real financial difficulty. The same summary measures were now dealt out to the workmen, and even an employer who

presumed to grant demands which his fellow-employers had refused to yield found his generosity dealt with as a crime and punished by a fine! It was just as well that restrictive laws should be courageously impartial in their operation.

But economical changes, new conditions of labour, increasing population, and the constant migration of a thriftless and useless country surplus into the towns, soon forced to the front another question. The problem of the support of the poor was one of the most serious which the next century had to face. At a later day, we shall find it dividing men of equally honest convictions, and to whom it is only fair to ascribe equal benevolence of intention, into two hostile camps, sundered from one another by radical differences as to the ethical aspects of the question. At present the controversy was only at its earliest stage. In former days the problem of the poor had not been one of great difficulty in Scotland. The humbler class were linked to their betters as their domestic dependents, or as members of their clan. Where such bonds were insufficient, many quaint and kindly usages prevailed which helped the poor to eke out some kind of existence, and licensed beggary was a common incident of Scottish life, and lent to it a trait which was not lacking in interest and picturesqueness. Only a hundred years before, an assessment was made permissive for each parish by the Legislature; and where it was adopted, the funds, eked down by the collections at the church doors, were administered by the heritors and kirk-session of the parish. How far assessment was prevalent over Scotland in 1770 it is impossible to say with accuracy. When Sinclair's "Statistical Account" was compiled some twenty years later, it

prevailed over some two-thirds of the population; but the progress in the interval had probably been large. In 1770 the question of the poor in Edinburgh had reached an acute stage. Beggary had grown to the proportions of an intolerable nuisance. Crowds of Highlanders, shiftless, ignorant, and dirty, gathered in the most noisome corners of the old town, and earned a precarious livelihood by running errands and doing odd jobs as caddies. The provision of education was lamentably insufficient, and the whole machinery of parish administration was unequal to the task of dealing with this new swarm of immigrants. Poorhouses were built with the hope of making it possible to deal with the aged and helpless poor; but the existing resources fell appallingly short of the necessities. The only means by which they were supported were the church-door collections; and church-going was so sure a mark of all who claimed respectability that this yielded a regular, if insufficient, revenue. It appears that something like 30s. or £2 might be counted upon as the contribution to the poor which each adult church-goer would give; and the fact that the collection was made in open "plates" at the church door rendered it no easy matter to elude the contribution. But it still fell short of the needs; and even with the niggard expenditure of £3500 a year on houses which contained 680 inmates, the church collections failed to meet it. In such circumstances an assessment was proposed under the statute of 1672.

The proposal aroused in Edinburgh the fiercest opposition, and the detailed facts that are recorded give us some interesting particulars as to the valuation of the capital. If an assessment were imposed, it was

considered certain that the church-door collections would cease; charity and rate-paying for the same object do not naturally go well together. And in that case, appalling estimates were drawn of the probable assessment. The total valuation of the old town was £34,000: that of the new town (so soon to be the abode of all the wealthy in Edinburgh) was reckoned at £3000 only. But to add to the iniquity of the tax, it was pointed out that houses to the value of more than £12,000—or nearly one-third of the whole—were exempt from taxation as belonging to the "privileged" class—that is, the senators and various dependants of the College of Justice. On the remainder a tax of 10 per cent. would yield only £2500! It would be rendered all the more galling because the richest class would be exempt. The legal aristocracy of Edinburgh was to be free from an oppressive tax, while at the same time the old and time-honoured source of income, which connected the support of the poor with religious ordinances, and which had all the soothing gratification of an act of charity, was to be swept away. It is no wonder that the proposal was rejected. The poor law expenditure grew apace. Spasmodic efforts were started, and some attempt was made to board out the children, and so free them from the degrading associations of the poorhouse. But even in 1790, when Sinclair's "Account" was compiled, Edinburgh gave no statistics of an assessment for the poor. It was at length forced upon her; and we shall find, when energetic attempts were next made to deal with a difficulty of which the dimensions were constantly growing, that the assessment principle was opposed, not in the interests of the ratepayers, but in the proud belief that individual and congregational zeal in the performance of a charitable

duty, were better agents than a legal rate, administered by paid agents. The struggle will come before us at a later date.

The economical changes through which the country was passing acted equally upon the opposite scale of society. The system of land tenure was undergoing a revolution. The landed aristocracy had always been jealous of their privileges and tenacious of those conditions of property that safeguarded their class. Pride of birth and aristocratic exclusiveness taught them to guard their position even by provisions which severely restricted the rights of the nominal proprietor, and kept him bound to his paternal domain under conditions which often involved grinding poverty. The Entail Act of 1685 had limited the proprietor of an entailed estate to the strictest life ownership. He could not burden the estate to plant a single tree, to bring the most barren moor into cultivation, or to carry out the most necessary improvements. He could not meet the demands of his creditors to the extent of a single penny beyond his annual rents; and estates passed under the strictest settlement from father to son, which formed nothing but a *damnosa hæreditas*, but which nevertheless kept an old family in secure possession, albeit restricted to the soil like the veriest serfs.

In 1690 the aristocracy managed to pass another statute, which prevented the forfeiture of an entailed estate for treason. This was done away with by the Act of 1708, which assimilated the law of treason to that of England, and which thus rendered a man's direct heirs, although not the remainder men, subject to forfeiture.

The policy which the aristocracy pursued—that of

protection of the permanence of their own order—was sound enough from their own point of view. But the economical difficulties of the existing law sterilised the land, and prevented the improvement of the most important national asset. Public opinion grew more and more strong in condemnation of a state of things so thoroughly harmful to the public interest; and even the judges, bound as they were by sympathy and association to the territorial aristocracy, were almost unanimous in their denunciation of the system. Land, it was seen, could not safely be excluded from the ordinary laws of a commercial community, and doubtless the pressure of the law upon individual heirs of entail made them not unwilling, even against the abstract interests of their class, to turn a ready ear to proposals for a modification. This was pushed most strongly by Sir John Dalrymple, and at length in 1770 an Act, commonly known (from the name of the Lord-Advocate of the day) as the Montgomery Act, was passed, which permitted a tenant of an entailed estate to grant leases of farms for nineteen years, and building leases for ninety-nine, and to burden the estate with the cost of permanent improvements up to a certain amount and under certain conditions. In 1824, by the Aberdeen Act, tenants for life could burden their estates with provisions for their widows and children; and the change thus wrought was carried much further by the subsequent legislation.

Throughout every class of society and in all parts of Scotland changes of the first importance were in progress. Scottish character does not at least lack the charm of variety, and each part of the country had its own marked peculiarities. The Border counties

were settling down after the days of the old Border raids, when the insecurity of the police system had made each man's arm the chief protection of his life and his property. After the long waste of mutual plunderings, the inhabitants on both sides of the line were acquiring, with greater stability of order, new prosperity; but they retained much of the old independence that had always marked them, and that rugged physical courage and sturdy force of intellect that make them even now a type that ranks high amongst the citizens of Great Britain. In no part of the country were the farmers more prosperous than were the tenants of these wide pasture-lands, and nowhere did they approach so closely in tastes and habits to the old type of English yeomen. In the eastern Lowlands, whose tradition and romance had entwined itself with every mountain and valley, and lived in a thousand lays that had grown into the hearts of the people, the lingering memories of an older state of society were even more powerful, and it is no wonder that in such a region Scottish romance found its chosen home. In the west, the old covenanting spirit was still strong. It was there that the religious revival which soon after swept over the land found its securest settlement, recalling as it did the older days when religious feeling was stirred to enthusiasm by persecution. As in these older days, the passion of religious feeling was found side by side with a keen and acute grasp of worldly wisdom—a combination which satire may easily ridicule, which not unnaturally provokes suspicions of hypocrisy, but which to students of human nature is not perhaps without a suggestive interest. On the north-eastern coast there was to be found a population—chiefly

Scandinavian in origin—which was sharply divided from the rest of the people both in character and in habits. The county of Fife had been the chief nursery of dissent, and held itself aloof from the rest of Scotland with a tenacity of purpose that became proverbial. On the other hand, the fishermen who dwelt along the northern part of the coast seemed to have absorbed into their nature some of the hard air of the sea from which they drew their livelihood, and kept themselves jealously apart from the agricultural population that peopled the Mearns. Many a Mucklebackit family were to be found along that coast, and the great limner of Scottish manners drew from a familiar type. Their life of hardship and stern combat with the elements was one that passed by inheritance from father to son. They intermarried with one another, and sought neither kinship nor intercourse with the upland folk. With the religious and ecclesiastical disputes of Scotland they had little sympathy; and, curiously enough, with other traits which even to this day mark them off from their neighbours, they have inherited also a predilection for the Episcopalian form. Nowhere has that form retained from the past a stronger hold upon the humbler class than it has amongst the fishermen of the east coast, unaided by the zeal of any intrusive proselytism.

In all these regions, however, with much variety of phase, there was one preponderating type of character —strong, rugged, and quick in intellectual effort; tenacious of old habits, self-centred and reserved in its pride of race, and accustomed by long habit of endurance to master difficulties and to force a livelihood out of unpromising materials. But there remained the wider mountain tracts where the population was

purely Celtic, where the memories of enmity were the inheritance of centuries, and which, down to a late day, had lived outside the pale of the ordinary law. To settle the new economical position of these regions, and to conciliate their inhabitants, was the most difficult problem that Scotland had to face. The clan system had broken up: what was to take its place? How could these barren mountain tracts become amenable to law, and share in the general prosperity of the country? The Highlands could no longer be left in ignorance and poverty. The pastime and precarious subsistence which they had hitherto found in war were now denied them; and they could not be abandoned to the life of thieving which seemed the only alternative to starvation. Already they had flocked in large numbers to the towns, and congregated there, gaining a scanty and precarious livelihood—neglected, sordid, ignorant. Such a destiny was a poor one for a race which possessed many of the finest qualities that can exist in humanity. Friends and enemies could, with almost equal grounds, ascribe to them strangely different characters. Lazy, dirty, treacherous, thieving, and untruthful—such might be the epithets that an enemy would apply to them, and he might adduce no weak arguments to justify the condemnation. Romantic, loyal, and devoted; generous and hospitable; with singular grace of manner, and incomparable power of intellectual adaptiveness—all these were the qualities which a more sympathetic study of the race might reveal. It is to the credit of Scotland that she did not shirk the task which fate flung upon her, and the Church was not the last agency to attempt that task. Every effort was made—often in spite of scanty success—to establish new

industries in the Highlands, and to bring to them some share of the new commercial prosperity. Many of the landlords outstript their own class elsewhere in enlightened efforts to break the vicious system of agriculture and to encourage modern methods. The Assembly of the Church appointed a Commission of Inquiry, and Dr. John Walker, one of her ministers, as a result of most careful investigation, made proposals for dealing with the Celtic question, which have their practical interest even for our own day. He saw that the one essential condition was the spread of the English language—an opinion which the sentimentalists of our own day have vainly tried to controvert. To do this by means of English ministrations he pronounced a hopeless task: the only possible machinery was that of English schools. Already the English schools, established by benevolent effort, had done a world of good; but much more remained to be done. Every effort must be made to check the influence of the Roman Catholic Church; and however suitable the policy of toleration might be for a later day and under more easy conditions, it can scarcely be questioned that to bring the Highlands within the fold of one religious communion was an indispensable instrument in making them share the common life of the nation. Nor was the condition of the Highlanders in the large cities forgotten. Every effort was made to raise their state, to educate their children, and to bring them within the influence of religious ministrations. In 1768, by means of a public subscription, a Gaelic Church was opened in Edinburgh. There was to be no violent breaking with their old habits and customs: but the influence for good was to carry out its mission by enlisting these habits on its side. The difficulties

indeed were great. The sledge-hammer force of economical truths was making it every day more clear that these barren regions could not, under natural conditions, support the surplus population that had grown amongst them. But against the hard teaching of these economical truths there was a powerful feeling of attachment to the soil, which made the Highlander cling to his mountains and his glens with a passionate intensity of love. These mountains and glens, aided by the characteristics of his race, had impressed his mind with a heavy shroud of superstition which was strangely blended with the poetry and romance that formed a part of his being. To make light of these would be a poor means of developing the characteristics of the race. To find in them an interest and a charm was the only means of reaching the heart of the Highlander, and of enabling him to find new fields in which the strongest of his characteristics might find a fitting sphere. The Highlands had not yet become the playground of the wealthy Englishman, who brought to them a new and not always very healthy source of life : and it was no small thing that before that day arrived, the work of Scotland for the development of the Highlands had already borne good fruit.

During the first decade of the reign of George III. Scotland was thus busily engaged with the problem of a transition in her economical conditions. One industry is so closely connected with the national character that it merits special attention. The agriculture of Scotland went through a revolution in the course of last century. In the earlier part of the century its conditions were primitive in the extreme, and these, combined with an ungenial climate and a soil which was fertile only when skilfully manipu-

lated, produced a state of the utmost poverty. But it was a poverty with which the independence of the national character combined an indomitable thrift, and to which its many-sided intellectual vigour added much content and enjoyment. The smaller tenants, surprising as it may seem, were, in the dearth of commerce, the chief moneyed men of an unmoneyed country, and their savings were frequently lent at good interest to the gentry upon whom the burden of expense attending their station necessarily fell. But the savings of thriftiness bring content and satisfaction not in proportion to their amount, but from the simple fact that they exist; and so long as their existence is possible the motive to increase the rate at which they swell is comparatively weak, especially with a nation which had abundance of additional interests. The primitive methods of agriculture, therefore, still continued. A community of culture, by which the neighbours in a hamlet shared field with field in alternate parcels—what was called the "run-rig" system—was the general habit. Individual enterprise and activity found no encouragement under such a system. On the other hand, the tenants, if they did not make the most of their holdings, had little to fear in the way of extortionate rents from landlords with whom they claimed kinship, and to whom it never occurred to prefer a money gain to the traditional bonds of relationship or family ties in accordance with which their tenants were selected.

But such a system could not endure with the advance of wealth and the increased incentives to its accumulation. Nothing is more striking in the history of Scotland during last century than the rapidity with which the country passed from an almost patri-

archal system to the economical arrangements of modern times. It was in the Highlands where the primitive system lasted longest in its integrity, but where also it most rapidly underwent transformation. The abolition of the hereditary jurisdiction did much for the Highlands; but it accomplished its task at the expense of much that produced hardship for a generation. Estates which had been held on terms approaching very closely to those of feudal service now lost the weight and dignity which were adjuncts of proprietorship, and were held as sources of revenue, to be turned to the most profitable uses. In place of the black cattle, the rearing of which had been the chief source of revenue to the Highland proprietor, it became more profitable to stock the Highland pastures with sheep, for whose guardianship few hands need be employed. This was an undoubted economical advantage, and it was pressed with patient and unremitting zeal by a certain David Loch, who wrote with much intelligence on Scottish manufactures, and saw a great future for the Highlands in connection with the woollen industry, which he desired to see flourish even at the expense of the linen trade. For his day, he was undoubtedly a man of foresight and intelligence; and he would have been a wild and visionary dreamer who would then have prophesied that the future wealth of Scotland was to depend on her minerals—then scarcely more than guessed at—and on the many gigantic industries to be based upon them. But however economically sound might be the spread of sheep farms, it had another aspect which was less cheering. The Highland glens lost their closely packed inhabitants—all bound to the chief and recognised by him as not dependants only, but

kinsmen—and only roofless walls and deserted garden-plots preserved the memory of many populous townships. Those dispossessed refused to find a refuge amongst the Lowlanders, who were their traditional foes, and whose manners and language were equally unintelligible, and preferred emigration beyond the Atlantic, where their lot was often little above that of slaves. The old ties were broken; the Duniewassals, or gentlemen tenants, who claimed kinship with their chief, and who found in the traditional debt of military service something that exempted them from an obligation to industry, rapidly disappeared. With them any semblance of a middle class between the greater landlords and the humbler tenants faded away; and with its eclipse there came a change of manners and of ideas that transformed the Highlands.

Something of the same kind went on in the Lowlands, where no such sacred tie as that between the chief and his vassals existed. There the smaller tenants found an easy refuge in the towns, where growing commerce offered an ever more tempting bait. By means of the progress of the banking system, and perhaps still more as a consequence of foreign intercourse, money increased. Scotsmen who had sought their fortunes in the East or West Indies returned with much ready money, which they were eager to invest in acres on their native soil. Land that was rarely in the market—and which, indeed, was hardly a marketable commodity—now commanded a ready sale at some thirty years' purchase, and its resources had been so little developed that it amply repaid the outlay of capital upon it in the way of planting, manuring, draining, and fencing—occupations which comfortably occupied the leisure and adequately remunerated the

investments of the moneyed Scot who had braved the adventures and dangers of the East, and now sought to close his days in the dignified ease of a landlord backed by ample capital. Methods of cultivation necessarily improved under such conditions. Roads were constructed, and in almost every county the moneyed men found in the Road Board a little council where administrative capacity was not lost, and where there was a wholesome emulation of zeal. All the tenants were induced—or forced—to contribute their share of labour for the common work, and the military roads constructed by the Government aided in the work. Carriages became not uncommon, and carts with spoked wheels, hitherto scarcely known, began to make the transit of goods more easy, and thus to widen the markets.

The natural result of this was that the landlords found themselves in the possession of a marketable commodity, and their expenses increased. The lavish style of living practised by the Indian nabob must not be allowed to obscure the dignity of the older families. Their family pride, which might have rendered them secure of rivalry, only tempted them to new expenses, with the inevitable result. The indebtedness increased; the sale of estates led to the breaking of old ties, and the establishment in their place of merely commercial relations. The necessity of raising rents to their utmost estranged tenant from master, and made the new tie a mere colourless reflection of the old one.

Alongside of this there was another tendency—the result of enlightened notions and of earnest public spirit—which equally helped to bring about that revolution in agriculture which the new commercial spirit infused into the landlord class rendered inevi-

table. Amongst the wealthier landlords, accustomed to spend a large part of the year in England, there arose a fashionable emulation in the introduction of English methods of farming. They were aided by a large class of speculative gentlemen farmers, who relieved their professional labours by agricultural pastimes, and who prided themselves on the ingenuity of the schemes which they evolved in their study, and in the midst of philosophical lucubrations. In all this there was much that was absurd. Money was lavishly spent on projects which led to nothing but the expenditure of much ingenuity and the eventual jeers of the men who held to the practice of their fathers. But with all their absurdities the ultimate consequence was all for good. Their theories were often whimsical. In their slavish imitation of English methods they often forgot that they had to deal with the stubborn factors of a Scottish climate and a Scottish soil. They lost much money and moved much ridicule. But they contributed in the end to the breaking down of antiquated methods, to the use of modern implements, to a scientific rotation of crops, to the substitution of convenient appliances for costly manual labour, and to the abolition of systems of culture that exhausted the soil. They had to meet with abundant opposition. Their failures provoked criticism. Religious bigotry stood in their way, as when the Antiburghers objected to the use of "fanners" for winnowing corn, on the ground that it amounted to an impious usurpation of the functions of the Deity in the "creating of wind." But slowly, and in spite, not of opposition only, but also of their own often whimsical impracticality, the agricultural reformers won the day. They learned to adapt English methods to the Scottish

"tids" or seasons, and the theories which they had pushed to the detriment of their purses and their credit for sound judgment were worked to good purpose by more practical men.

About 1760 successful war still further increased the capital of the country, and the sale of estates became still more easy and more lucrative with the competition amongst purchasers. Prices both for corn and for stock increased largely, and the extensive use of paper money, owing to enlarged banking operations, made the apparent capital still more abundant. Luxury of living and emulous attention to display became more common. Various commodities which had before been of rare occurrence now sprang into common use. Even the humbler tenants, if their stores, painfully accumulated, were less, indulged themselves in more of those appliances which later generations have converted into necessities. But the old content was gone; the old ties were broken: a new world had replaced that which had once prevailed throughout the land.

It does not fall within the scope of a work dealing with the leading features of Scottish history to enter into literary criticism or to discuss in detail the successive phases of poetical composition. But it is necessary, in order to complete the picture of Scotland in the eighteenth century, to see what was her contribution to the literature of imagination and how this reflected the characteristics of the time.

The opening of the century succeeded a long period of sterility in poetical composition. Whatever the opposition offered to the Union, and however both in its results and in the manner of its adoption it may have outraged Scottish feeling and inflicted for a generation or two a rankling wound, it was neverthe-

less inevitable that it should stir men's minds and produce something of literary activity. Intellectual movements are not chilled by distaste for legislative processes; any important change in the life of a nation, be it the parent of enthusiasm or of disgust, quickens the stimulus to imaginative work. It is the stern experience of long struggle, the absorption in bitter controversy such as engaged men during the seventeenth century, that numbs the creative faculty. However distasteful it might be, the Union brought peace and brought the germs of a new prosperity. The clash of weapons was silenced, and peace and prosperity left men disengaged for calmer and quieter pursuits. In the opening quarter of the century social life was lively and engaging. Intellectual activity was stirred by the clubs that grew in luxuriance in the capital, where conviviality and wit throve better than the stern tenets of ecclesiastical and political factions, and where even those who hated the course of dominant politics yet cherished their own tenets rather in the guise of romantic and patriotic sentiments than of political convictions which compelled a practical struggle. All that threatened to obscure and obliterate the traditions of Scotland, all that weakened the sense of her nationality, all that portended her subjection to the moods of her more powerful neighbour, stirred a sense of patriotism that was not altogether unpleasing even to those who indulged in jeremiads on her fallen greatness. Such an atmosphere was eminently fitted to encourage the literary side of Scottish national life, and the exasperation of offended patriotism found in that sphere a safer and a more congenial occupation than in the fierce and more irksome toil of supporting in the political arena a failing cause.

The reawakened literary activity took two distinct lines, linked to one another in some of their aims, and combining in their ultimate results but diverse in their methods. The first was the revival of the vernacular literature and the adapting to a new generation the older forms of Scottish song. In this kind the most active worker was Allan Ramsay, who, from being a barber's apprentice, gradually achieved a literary position in his own generation that was unique, and placed his country under an obligation for greater results than any which he himself achieved. In the collections which engaged his first literary efforts he recalled the Scottish vernacular literature of ballad and of song, uncritically indeed, and with none of the nice discrimination which was yet to be applied to the older treasures by genius greater than his own, but none the less with a freedom, a homeliness, a sympathy, and a wit, that breathed into his collections something far stronger than a mere antiquarian interest, and which attracted the attention of far more than a literary audience. It is easy to find fault with his methods, to decry his free handling of the older traditional forms, and to point out where he falls below the grace and simplicity of the older national muse. But yet it is doubtful whether a nicer scholarship or a more refined literary taste would have accomplished what the homely industry and the racy wit of the Edinburgh bookseller wrought for our old literature. The simplicity of the national genius was not lost. The characteristic touch of humour blended with romance, that formed its most distinctive feature, was preserved, with a certain freshness and verve, by the individuality of Ramsay, and his sympathy with the realities of life and with nature made him keep in touch with what was the most

valuable inheritance of Scottish song. His geniality won for him the favour of the leading spirits of the nation. His revival of the older forms harmonised not with the taste only, but with the deeper feelings of his day; and whatever the limitations of his genius, the author of the "Gentle Shepherd" claims the profound gratitude of his nation as one who transmitted a tradition, and who passed on the torch through the hands of Robert Fergusson to the more powerful arm and more commanding genius of Burns.

But he did not stand alone, although in this line his work is vastly more important than that of any compeer. There were others who passed away from the vernacular, and who carried into the main stream of English poetry something of the spirit of the Scottish muse. Scottish poetry had other qualities besides those of quaint dialect, rustic humour, and legendary story. Its first instinct, and that which gave to it its most enduring influence, was that of sympathy with nature —a sympathy not based on any pathetic fallacy, not weighted with any burthen of ethical allusion, but direct, simple, and real. Of those who carried this strain into English poetry and breathed into it a breath of freshness after a long period of restraint and artificiality, by far the greatest was Thomson, Ramsay's contemporary. But there were others who, in a lesser degree, laboured with Thomson to acquire what was a foreign diction, and who accomplished the painful task, it may be with some loss to the vigour and freedom of their own genius, but certainly with vast and far-reaching influence on English poetry.

But it is no part of our present task to trace the course of the national stream after it mingles its waters with the mightier river of English literature. It is our

business rather to trace the reflex influence on Scottish thought and life. Thomson found a home in England, like his weaker compeers, Mallet, and Armstrong, and Falconer; but his genius still exercised a great influence on his countrymen. Some of his pictures of nature are drawn from his own land; some of his portraits are painted from his fellow-countrymen; and undoubtedly the place his genius gained for him tended to foster and encourage the cultivation of an English style by Scottish writers. The vernacular was kept alive, and its embers were yet to be rekindled in one glorious blaze by the matchless genius of Burns. But this was but a tradition to which only consummate genius could impart that vitality and permanence which fixed it for all time in the form in which its immortality was to be enshrined. Another medium was needed for the large body of the Scottish contribution to English literature; and there can be no doubt that the success of the Scottish aspirants to a place in English literature was the most direct and effective encouragement to the literary activity shown in Edinburgh during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In the sphere of poetry, if there were no stars of the first or even of the second magnitude which appeared in Edinburgh, yet there was a long line which reflected a very respectable brilliance on the Scottish capital. In the generation which followed that of Ramsay and Thomson there came Home, the author of "Douglas;" Wilkie, the author of the "Epigoniad;" Falconer and Logan, Beattie and Michael Bruce. Each merits some attention, and from among the forgotten pages of their poems, once popular and greedily read, there may still be culled passages of high merit that have lingered somehow in the mouths of men long after the fountain

from which they are drawn has been lost in oblivion. But one characteristic they all partook of, and it was one which not only affected all the literature of the coming age, but gave Scotland a powerful place in determining the predominant spirit of that literature, and that characteristic was the strong and lasting one of Romance. In spirit and in form, in subject and in treatment, this fresh inspiration, which was to bring new colour and new animation into the conventionalities of life, was the most pervading influence in all their work. They had adopted a foreign tongue; they wrote very largely for a foreign public; they imitated foreign models and foreign mannerisms. In much they repeated the artificial tricks of the older school of English poetry, but they had given to it a new note in their instinct for nature, and now they added a new inspiration in lighting up the music and the fire of Romance. They had sought their medium and their language, even their manner, in the English school, and not only did they never entirely break away from it, but the alliance produced an effect on Scottish literature that never died away as long as that literature retained any separate existence. No one who studies the prose style, the temperament, even the poetic diction of Scott, can fail to see that, with all his romance, it has become familiar to him in a diction which echoed something of the school, not of Pope and Dryden only, but of their less gifted and more artificial successors. It was this traditional colouring which prevented Scotland from indulging in that forced and laboured simplicity of diction which to some enhances, and to others perhaps detracts from, the genius of Wordsworth and his school.

It may not be amiss here to note one singular outburst of popular feeling which turned upon an almost

forgotten lawsuit, and which serves as an illustration of the immense interest aroused by the fate of her historic houses. For some years about this period, there was probably no subject of greater interest to the majority of Scotsmen than the great Douglas lawsuit. During these years, it is not too much to say that it divided the nation into two hostile camps. For a time it seemed likely to establish new principles of law. It set class against class. It provoked bitter family feuds. It directly influenced political parties. It has now sunk below the stream of history, and emerges only as an illustration of the social features of the day.

The case turned upon the succession to the Dukedom of Douglas. The last Duke died childless, and the succession would naturally have passed to the family of the Duke of Hamilton, which would then have absorbed the two premier dukedoms of the country. But a claim was put forward by Archibald Douglas, as the son of Lady Jane Douglas, the niece of the late Duke. The circumstances of his birth were undoubtedly suspicious. It was alleged to have taken place in an obscure lodging-house in Paris—hardly the fitting scene of birth for the probable heir to one of the leading families of Scotland—and when his mother had passed the mature age of fifty years. It was easy to see how a fraud could well have been perpetrated, and the starting of such a claim was not likely to be looked upon with favour by the adherents of the great family of Hamilton. On the other hand, it was clear that the birth had been acknowledged by the parents; and even had a wrong motive been proved on their part, it was unlikely to have been pressed to the length of a death-bed acknowledgment, as was the case here. The cause

divided Scotland, as we might expect. On the one hand, the upper classes generally strongly supported the Hamilton claim, and did not scruple to accuse that of Douglas as a self-evident fraud. His rights found sympathy, as a rule, only amongst the lower classes; but that sympathy took very tangible form. The claimant appeared to rise from poverty and obscurity. The evidence on his behalf was undoubtedly strange and hard to credit. The broad principle of law, that children were the offspring of their apparent parents, unless these parents expressly disallowed paternity, seemed here to be pushed to dangerous lengths. It demanded, in this instance, a severe strain on credulity, and it was urged in subversion of the long-admitted claim of a great family. On the one hand, there was sympathy for that family, and undoubtedly a preponderance of probability. On the other hand, there was a principle of law which was ordinarily applied, and which, it was argued, ought not to be set aside because it told in favour of an obscure and almost friendless claimant against a powerful family. This is not the place to canvass minutely the legal arguments: it is sufficient to point to the popular aspect of the case. After a long and careful hearing before the Court of Session, the judges were evenly divided, and a decision adverse to the claimant was given by the casting vote of the Lord President Dundas. This was the signal for an unthinking burst of popular fury; and so strong was the feeling, that the houses of the adverse judges were attacked, and the dignity of the Court seemed to be assailed. On appeal, the case was carried to the more impartial tribunal of the House of Lords, and there, apart from the excitement of partisanship, a decision which

favoured the popular view was given by the unanimous voice of the law lords. The general principle of the law prevailed, and was affirmed by the dispassionate voices of such men as Lord Mansfield and Lord Camden. The popular opinion obtained a triumph. But the decision was an unfortunate one for the aristocracy of Scotland. It undoubtedly appeared to rebuke the sympathy which the Scottish Court had shown for that aristocracy; and it did not serve to increase their love for the supreme arbitration of what might still be held to be a foreign tribunal.

Before we leave this phase of Scottish life that existed in the early years of the reign of George III., let us glance at two pictures of our country, drawn by the hands of strangers of very different character. Both help us "to see ourselves as others see us," though the value of the pictures is vastly different. In 1769 the indefatigable tourist, Pennant, paid a visit to Scotland, and his description so stirred Anglican curiosity, that he was tempted to that pitfall of authors—a second and a longer book, describing a new tour over much the same ground. It shows the practised hand of the hardened globe-trotter—quick to catch impressions, faithful in its records, describing with painstaking accuracy the leading features of the scenes through which he passed. He is impressed by the neatness and trimness of the towns—above all, by the air of solidity given by their stone-built houses. He doubtless astonished the Saxon, accustomed to regard Scotland as little more than the home of barbarism and poverty, by telling of the noble domains that he found scattered through the land. Now and then he gives long descriptions of strange and characteristic customs—doubtless gathered

at second-hand—and he enlarges them by copious illustrations of other customs elsewhere which he had read or heard of in his multifarious journeyings. Occasionally he gives his own experiences; and he helps us to know the clergy of Scotland by telling how they were "the most decent and consistent in their conduct of any set of men I ever met with in their order," and how they were "very much changed from the furious, illiterate, and enthusiastic teachers of the old times"—those old times which had served to give the prevailing impression to himself and his countrymen. We have abundant information about the *fauna* of Scotland, and about its antiquities which he had pictured to illustrate his book. Bishop Percy thought Pennant's volumes insufferably dull and tame, and probably most modern readers will agree with the verdict. From beginning to end it is the Cockney describing a life into which he could not enter, whose strangeness he did not really comprehend, the romance of which he was incapable of picturing to himself in the prosaic surroundings of his own plodding life. But Dr. Johnson—to whose hand we owe the companion picture—knew the difficulties of description, and was more lenient in his judgment than Bishop Percy. He recognised Pennant's care and accuracy and his power of observation, and he knew how hard the unwonted task had been to his own massive intellect. His own tour had been the cherished aim of many a long year, spent in the toils of professional literature and circumscribed by the narrow world of Fleet Street. He came with imbedded prejudices, which he parades with a half-humorous and nowise rancorous persistence. But if we wish to see what the country was, we have to go, not to the well-trained and assiduous

hack, but to the untried but keen-visioned man of genius, who tested each new incident in the alembic of his own insight and his own incomparable breadth of sympathy. The easy flow of his narrative never strains either the effort of the writer or the patience of the reader. It ranges over every phase of the subject, expatiates on its many-sided interest, theorises upon its meaning, throws a sidelight upon every passing scene, and gives us to the very life the Scotsman as he appeared to the old man who had made city life one with his own, and whose fancy and whose insight were quick with the liveliness of genius, in spite of the narrow range of experience in which he had moved for seventy years. It is to Johnson that we go to see the life, the houses, the food, the garments—nay, the very speech and manners of the Scotsmen amongst whom he passed, and who were attracted to his personality by the magnetic force of a master-mind. He alternates with inimitable power grave disquisitions with quaint humour; he describes incidents, not as they assumed importance to the commonplace traveller, but as they threw a subdued light upon the character of the people, or as they pointed a striking contrast. It is to him, and not to Pennant, that we must go if we are to see how the traits of character that live to this day were present more than a hundred years ago, and how traces of the old and barbarous customs of mediævalism were blended with the new influences of modern life. He tells us of the wonderful grace of manner that gave to the humblest Highlander something of the instinctive grace of a gentleman; how their readiness of reply was based upon an anxiety to please, and how the truth or falsehood of their information was a petty accident which the graces of social

intercourse taught them to neglect. He enters with wonderful insight into their religious feeling, and catches instinctively the lingering symptoms of old customs. He lingers over their superstitions—half-sympathetic with their mood, half-humorous in his grave exposition of their origin. He makes of his very unfitness for the unwonted rôle of a cicerone an added charm, and he disarms our criticism by his closing words, "My thoughts on national manners are the thoughts of one who has seen but little." Yet when we have read his book, we feel that we have an added insight, not only into the Scotland of this decade, but into the extent of its contrast with the English society of the day. Pennant's book is a useful itinerary; Johnson's Journal has the indescribable but irresistible charm of a monument of literary genius.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM 1770 TO 1780.

THE next decade is one of the highest importance in the history of Scotland, although its results are to be traced not so much in any outward effects as in the laying of the foundations upon which the history of the next generation was to be based. The economic changes of which we have just spoken were problems of the deepest interest for Scotland. She found herself face to face with a new state of things, which, throughout all her borders, was working a gradual change in social conditions. The political results developed more slowly still. At first sight, it might appear as if the period from 1770 to 1780 was a colourless and stationary one; but in truth it was one of those periods in the life of a nation when the forces which were to rule the next generation were taking shape.

In the first place, it was during this period that the distinctive character of the Scottish citizen for at least three generations to follow was most definitely shaped. As it is conceived by his Southern neighbour, that character is a strange medley. The conception is one to which remote history and legendary romance have alike contributed. It is drawn from the wild fury of

civil warfare : the lawless recklessness of unrestrained robbery : the scenes of fierce religious contention and the gloomy fanaticism which was for a time the inevitable inheritance of that contention—all alike have lent some lurid colour to the picture thus carelessly thrown on the canvas. It is a picture drawn partly from intercourse with the quiet and phlegmatic Lowlander, and partly from the tales of the fiery and romantic Celt, the hereditary foe of the Lowlander. Such a conception sank into the mind of the Englishman when he had little opportunity of correcting it by personal experience. It has remained ever since as an irresistible and dominating impression, if not an actual belief. The barriers between the two nations have gradually grown weaker or have broken down. It is only on occasion, now-a-days, that a pasteboard, painted to look like a barrier which is long since out of date, is set up by the exigencies of a faction, or to suit the passing humour of some small and insignificant group. Even the Cockney might now be found to smile at the traditionary picture of the Scotsman which habit and inheritance make him, almost involuntarily, form to himself. But a hundred years ago that picture had all the force of an elementary axiom ; and the picture was, in all its principal features, painted chiefly in the decade of which we now treat.

For the first half of the century Scotland had been to all intents and purposes as separate from England in thought and character as if the Act of Union had never been passed. That Act had stimulated rather than checked the mutual dislike. A vague picture of a country alien in race and language, differing in law and custom, from which resistance and danger might

be expected—such was the aspect in which Scotland appeared to the Englishman. This dislike and these fears seemed to be fully justified by the Jacobite rebellions; and the fact that these rebellions found sympathisers in England did not in any degree lessen the feeling of uneasy perturbation with which England regarded the country of their inception and of their passing triumphs. When the final fall of Jacobite pretensions came, in 1745, there was an opportunity for the two nations to grow together and each to view with less asperity the idiosyncrasies of the other. Signs were not wanting that it might be so. In Scotland, at least, a large and influential body of the people were anxious to break down the marks of separation, to promote intercourse, to pay the flattery of imitation to English custom and English usages, and even in literature to cultivate English models. The victories of the Empire were hailed by Scotland as things in which she shared, and the foresight and genius of Chatham found a means whereby the heroism of the Highland clans might be one of the bulwarks of the dynasty which it had so recently shaken by an effort of desperate valour. The fringe of possible disorder being thus turned into a fertile recruiting ground, it might have seemed natural that the more peaceable parts of both nations should have coalesced into one, and have grown into unity of habit and of custom, of thought, religion, and even of law, which would have left the lines of demarcation only as memories.

Whether the Empire as a whole, or Scotland as a part of it, would have been any the better for such a peaceable solution of the position, is a matter on which it is at least permissible to have a doubt. Un-

questionably it was a consummation which a statesman would have been compelled to desire, and which he would have been justified in pressing forward by all means in his power. To achieve it would have appeared a model of political strategy. It would have hastened the commercial prosperity of Scotland by at least a generation, and by means of it some points of divergence which even now keep the two nations in separate grooves of thought and feeling might have been obliterated. But just as surely much that has been of vast moment in the development of character, in the range and variety of the national temperament, even in the actual product of the national genius, would have been undreamt of, and neither England nor Scotland would have been what they are now in combination.

But however this might have been, events made it impossible. There is a saying of Johnson with regard to Bute which is not without interest in this connection. "It would have been better," said Johnson, "if Bute had never been Minister, or had never resigned." What Johnson probably intended was, that the ideal which stood in a shadowy way behind Bute's Ministry, the ideal of a nation united under the crown, and content to forget the separation and distinctions either of nationality or of party, was a desirable one, if only it could have been made permanent or real; but that without this permanence the influence of such a fancy was harmful rather than good. Taken in this sense, the saying is one for which there is ample justification. The dream which Bute for the moment typified, but which he in no way originated, was an attractive one; but his attempt to realise it left parties exasperated, and was the beginning of a faction fight of unexampled

bitterness. It tore the two nations asunder, and made it certain that each would follow separate lines of thought, of sympathy, and of politics. Its results were seen at every turn of our road through the history of the next eighty years; and it was largely due to the events with which the reign of George III. opened that Scotland has a history of her own to chronicle for at least two generations more.

The wild outburst of popular feeling that involved the whole Scottish nation in the prejudice against Bute; that united statesman, essayist, poet, and satirist in an insane crusade against anything that hailed from the north of the Tweed; that made no gibe too trite and no sarcasm too fierce to be an instrument wherewith to provoke the susceptibilities of the Scot; that pointed the attack of Junius on Lord Mansfield, and made a Scottish accent or Scottish descent amply sufficient grounds for accusations of political corruption against a statesman—all this was treated by Scotland with an apparent apathy that is almost surprising. The answers to those attacks, as we have already said, were comparatively few. Some of the chief agents of the Government in Scotland were not ashamed even to bend to the storm, and to deprecate the support of congratulatory addresses from Scotland on the Peace, lest these should provoke the suspicion of the English. The attitude of Scotland in this wild outburst of epidemic madness was that of dignified disregard, but none the less the iron entered into her soul. Insults may not provoke a war of words, but they are none the less felt. Nor were these insults without an accompaniment of positive wrong which might well stir the indignation of a proud nation. The refusal of a Scottish Militia on account of the alleged danger from lingering

Jacobite pretensions, not only involved an imputation upon the undoubted loyalty of the vast majority of the nation, but it was a distinct financial wrong, inasmuch as the imperial subsidy was paid to the English Militia partly out of Scottish taxation. Scant attention was paid to the claims of Scottish commerce, and schemes of fiscal improvement were neglected and delayed. More than once the Lord Advocate, as chief representative of the Government in Scotland, had to express his sympathy with legislative proposals, but to confess that he might press them without success upon an apathetic Ministry. The result of all this was that Scotland was driven back upon herself, and that out of the various elements in her midst she had to construct a national character widely separated from that of England. It is no exaggeration to say that the years from 1770 to 1780 created a wider line of demarcation than had existed five-and-twenty years before. From that decade date many of the most characteristic features of the national type, which for fifty years more was to stand in what often seems unnecessary isolation from English methods and English habits of thought, and which was to bequeath, even to our own day, a tendency to divergence which any tactlessness or negligence on the part of Parliament or of the Government might even now widen or aggravate into active discontent. It was not the Scotland of Knox or of the Covenanters that was thus revived. Just as little was it the Scotland of the Jacobites. From all these it drew some characteristic traits, but in the main it was a Scotland dominated by bold speculation, full of a desire for intellectual and material advance, proud of its own history and its own national peculiarities, ardent in the pursuit of its own literary ideals; jealous

at the same time of its independence, provoked by virulent attacks and thoughtless gibes, and firm in the determination that its association with the predominant partner should be one of which it need not be ashamed.

We have not, then, to study the history of Scotland in the pages of imperial history, on which she had little influence except in sharing the burden of national defence. Isolated Scotsmen achieved for themselves great place and power, and Mansfield, Loughborough, Erskine, and Eldon show the influence which Scotsmen could exert on English law. But that influence they achieved not as Scotsmen, but as immigrants. English prejudice had driven Scotsmen of all parties into one nation, with certain points of disagreement, but occupied, nevertheless, with a history of their own, which they worked out in their own way.

During the earlier part of the century Scotland had been divided into two camps. The Jacobite cause had kept a large and influential class distant from all political influence, and proscribed at once in liberty of action and in property. It comprised the great majority of the territorial class, and included many men of culture and high feeling, who were tabooed as disaffected and as rebels. But this feeling had now died away. Jacobitism was now little but a romantic embroidery on Scottish life, a peg to hang poetic sentiment upon. Its traditions and its monuments were all around, and permeated Scottish feeling—but as a memory only. The Episcopalian Church had been the refuge of many who were alienated by the uncouth usages and unattractive creed that were associated with one

party in the Presbyterian Church. But as that party diminished in power and influence, a more liberal spirit pervaded the Church. The Episcopalians were no longer nonjurors, and were no longer looked upon with suspicion and dislike. They were recognised as Scotsmen, and gained more and more the respect which was due to their moderation and dignity of spirit. So also with the Highlands. Within living memory, the Highlands had been the centre of threatening lawlessness, of which the outbursts of rebellion had been but symptoms. They had been an unknown region, not amenable to the ordinary laws, and owning allegiance only to an almost barbaric system of clan government. Now they were no longer an undiscovered land. Their fastnesses were penetrated; Englishmen and Scotsmen alike found their scenery and their customs a mine of interest, and Scotsmen became proud of their poetry and romance. A few years before the Scottish vernacular literature was neglected and despised; it now became a field for antiquarians and a source from which Scottish genius drew fresh inspiration.

It would be absurd, of course, to say that all these elements coalesced, and that there was not abundance of controversial material within the Scottish nation. The Episcopalian was still looked upon with suspicion by the remnant who represented the rigid Covenanter of an older day. Within the Church itself there were divided parties, and the High-flyers still accused the Moderates of laxity and latitudinarianism. The boldness of philosophical speculation was dreaded by many, and its dangerous tendencies were freely denounced. Those who had been born and bred in the traditions of a proud hereditary caste were

indignant at the intrusion of a new moneyed class, who threatened to push them aside. But on the whole the controversies were fought with comparative mildness. The High-flyer did not shun social intercourse with the Moderate, and the clergy did not think their orthodoxy endangered by association with the speculative philosophers. The Jacobite was left free to indulge in speculative tenets of divine right, and to toast the king over the water, if he did not flaunt his forlorn treason in the face of authority.

Of political discussion there was almost none, and even what there was bore no resemblance to the party divisions that divided England. The patriotism of such as Wilkes had never awakened one chord of sympathy in Scotland, and Scotland had practically no interest at all in the reiterated attacks that fell upon the imperturbable calm of Lord North's Administration. The American War, of course, had a bearing too direct upon the prosperity of Scotland not to arouse, to a certain extent, her interest; but, with few exceptions, her inhabitants, or those who represented them, were content to support without question the measures of Lord North. The tirades of the Patriots had their effect in disgusting the great body of Scotsmen, and Scotland was effectually cut off from an Opposition which owed much of its influence to the foul-mouthed libellers of a nation. In her eyes, the King's Administration, under whatever Minister it might be named, deserved their loyal support, if only because it was attacked by those whose patriotism consisted chiefly in selfish factiousness and reckless abuse. The forty-five Scottish members of the House of Commons were, almost to a man, supporters of the Government, and in the few instances

where they are reckoned in the Opposition interest, this was due, in almost every case, to some local circumstances, which made the leading man in the electorate entertain some personal ground of pique against the Lord Advocate of the day. Before the decade was passed, the whole influence of the Government in Scotland was centred in the powerful hand of Henry Dundas (who became Lord Advocate in 1775), and in few of the parliamentary fights did he find any of his own countrymen arrayed against him. The only doubt, indeed, was how far, at a critical moment, the Government could reckon on the presence or the active interest of their supporters. In the famous division on Mr. Dunning's motion with regard to the power of the Crown in 1780, there were only seven Scottish members who voted against the Government. Twenty-three voted for the Government, but fifteen, or one-third of the whole representatives, did not take the trouble to attend. When the whole of Britain was divided between those who sent addresses to the Crown in favour of the American War, and those who sent petitions begging that means of conciliation should be pursued, the vast majority of the towns and counties of Scotland were to be found amongst the "Addressers." Glasgow, whose interests were so closely bound up with the American trade, was amongst the few exceptions the other way.[1]

In both these cases it may of course with justice be said that the Scottish members of Parliament represented only a handful of men who exercised an exclusive and most artificial franchise, while the municipal bodies

[1] The chief purchases of American tobacco by the farmers-general of France were made through Glasgow agents.

were corporations of the closest kind, which in no way represented the bulk of the inhabitants. But there was no resentment whatever against their action. The country was simply indifferent. Even with the most restricted franchise, an excited state of public opinion shows itself in the demeanour of the onlookers. In Scotland, if an election was contested, it was fought merely upon personal grounds, or on the merits of some local dispute, or when some burning question about the disputed settlement of a minister or the privileges of a trade guild was at stake. In ordinary society, politics was tabooed, and men preferred to discuss the pros and cons of a protracted litigation, the practical advantages or disadvantages of a certain rotation of crops, or problems as to the origin of society and the basis of our ethical notions. The flame of loyalty to the sovereign burned steadily enough, if it was not fanned into any special brightness by opposing blasts. Round the name of George III. had gathered something of the old attachment to King which had fed the last days of Jacobitism; and he was not loved the less because his choice of a Scottish favourite had been used as a weapon by his assailants. "Administration" was regarded as little more than the necessary mechanism by which the King must govern; and it was the duty of every loyal citizen to support it as something to which a rare, but more or less efficacious, appeal might occasionally be made.

It was during this placid period, when political disputation was all but silent, when parties hardly existed, but when Scotland was thrown back on herself by the outburst of factious libellers, that the foundations of the later Tory party were laid. Its political outlook was not very wide, nor did it cherish any very com-

prehensive political ideas. But it commanded the support of many men of high intelligence. It rested upon much that struck deep roots in the national tradition. Above all, it was in large measure the champion of a distinct nationality; it cherished national customs, and it rested on resentment at national insults.

Before the end of the decade we may trace the beginning of other movements. But first it will be well to observe some events of the time by means of which the development of social and economical as well as political change may be inferred.

The first of these is the strange outbreak of meal-mobs, as they were called, which took place in 1773. The rise in rent and the gradual growth of manufactures had increased the price of food. This was ascribed to the exporting of grain, which was possible after the home markets had been supplied. The growth of an artisan class which had no direct interest in agricultural production had been the cause of this rise in price; and it was this class whom the increased price chiefly affected. Not only were they of no political account in themselves, but they had no such connection with the landed interest as gave them any reflected importance. The pressure of hard prices turned their thoughts against the exportation of grain, and by a strange infatuation they thought that a remedy might be found by destroying the stores which were supposed to be accumulated for purposes of exportation. There were two ways in which the law prevented grain from falling to its natural price, neither of which was so much as questioned yet by the political economist. One was a bounty on exported corn; the other a fixed market price, above which the corn had to rise before

importation was permitted. It was only in this generation that political economists were beginning to question the foundation of such artificial methods of fixing prices; but the mobs sought a ready and less philosophical method of stopping the exports, which, as they fancied, were the cause of high prices, by trying to destroy them before they were sent abroad.

These meal-mobs of 1773 occurred chiefly along the banks of the river Tay between Perth and Dundee. One granary after another was attacked by what were apparently well-organised mobs, consisting chiefly of the artisans from the towns. The farmers were naturally defenceless, and there was absolutely no system of police to which they could turn. The local authorities were completely paralysed. Where a few rioters had been arrested, their liberation was successfully demanded by a larger crowd, with whom terms had to be made on condition that the stored grain should not be exported, but sold in the local market for such price as it might fetch. The agricultural interest was thus at bay, and had to seek safety in their own power of defence. The county gentlemen met together under the presidency of the Sheriff, and arranged the signals by which they should assemble with a sufficient number of their own dependants to repel any attack. In the maintenance of order it was thus necessary to have recourse to the most primitive methods. By these methods, which linked together landlord, tenant, and farm labourer for the protection of an industry in which they had a joint interest, the outbreaks of the artisans were for the time checked, and the authority of the fiscal laws was vindicated. Two lessons had been learned from this brief experience: the first, that, for its own protection, society must turn its attention to the

condition of the poor; the second, that order must be safeguarded by some system of police. Each of these lessons produced speedy results. Edinburgh led the way in the establishment in the same year of a Society for the Relief of the Honest and Industrious Poor. Throughout almost all the counties, with Midlothian and Forfarshire as the leaders, there were voluntary combinations for the establishment of a police force to be supported by the subscriptions of the inhabitants. It was by practical lessons in social economy and in self-government such as these, and not by the share that she was allowed to take in imperial politics, that Scotland learned first to play her part in political affairs. The lesson was learned far more quickly than it would have been learned in England under like conditions. England was too large, her provinces too much detached, their circumstances and conditions too varied, to allow one example to permeate the whole. But in Scotland, the lesson, once learned, quickly took root and spread. The leading men of each county had a common meeting-place in the capital. There they exchanged ideas, discussed plans, and arranged their schemes. There they had, in Dundas, the advantage of a master-mind, prompt to advise, skilful to guide, and equipped with abundant information as to the circumstances of each county. Scotland was detached from the general current of imperial affairs; she lacked any semblance of representative institutions; her parliamentary, like her municipal franchise, was nothing but a name. But she was learning the lesson of self-government, and it may be questioned whether the internal administration of Scotland under Dundas did not move under a stronger guidance from the centre, and with more of the strength that comes from unity,

than did England under the guidance of the central Government. Edinburgh was the capital of the country in a sense that London never was of England.

The Tayside rioters were brought to trial, but it is noticeable that evidence against them was not easily procured. Their defence was conducted with skill, and the case against them was not unduly pressed. Many of those put on their trial were acquitted, and the highest sentence on those convicted was that of transportation. The trials present a striking contrast to those which a few years later throw a stain on Scottish legal procedure. Clearly society felt strong enough for self-defence, and saw no need to press too hardly on the errors of misguided men, acting under the strain of poverty and starvation.

It turned with all the more assiduity to the more pleasing task of aiding the poor. The Edinburgh poorhouse was an institution of some years' standing. Hitherto it had depended on voluntary contributions and on church-door collections. These were no longer sufficient to cope with the increasing need, and the annual deficit was mounting. The more forward spirits had, as we have seen, already urged the adoption of a poor-rate; but the opposition was so strong that the scheme had to be abandoned for the time.

But these were not the only signs that labour difficulties were making themselves felt in Scotland. In Greenock during the same year there were riots by sailors who demanded higher wages, and whose demands had to be met by temporising.[1] But fears of a more

[1] Two or three years later disputes of a similar kind arose in Edinburgh, owing to a demand by the journeymen tailors for higher wages. The dispute was settled in a summary fashion. The Justices at Quarter Sessions fixed the wages at a shilling a day; and any journeyman who

urgent kind arose from the wide-spreading emigration from the Highlands. Shipload after shipload of able-bodied men, with wives and families, were compelled to quit their country for the American Colonies. The Highland glens were being fast depopulated, and not only were feelings of commiseration stirred in the hearts of those who saw nothing but evil for their country in the desertion of her sons, and of onlookers like Johnson, but, besides all that, the draining of a ready source of supply for the labour market was seen to threaten the very existence, much more the advance, of Scottish manufactures. The character of the population that was thus deserting Scottish soil in ever-increasing numbers is best judged from the fact that these bands of emigrants in almost every case carried with them a schoolmaster, to be supported at the common cost. A nation does not lightly part with emigrants who lay such store by their parental and social duties as these. Such emigrations were perhaps chiefly caused by, and were certainly most commonly ascribed to, the decay of the clan system and the break-up of the old social ties. But this was not always so; and we find evidence that it was sometimes due not to the lessened power of the feudal chieftain, but to the fact that the representatives of the old clan rulers still exerted such influence as they retained in the systematic encouragement of rapine, robbery, and disorder, which rendered it impossible for the peaceful farmer to secure or to retain a livelihood. It is to be feared that this was not rarely the true version of what romance might picture as the unwilling departure of

demanded, or any master who paid, a higher sum was to be liable to fine and imprisonment. An early lesson in compulsory arbitration, which finds advocates even in our own day!

the faithful dependant from the chief whose protecting care had sheltered him until changed conditions destroyed the power of doing so.[1]

But whatever the cause, there can be no doubt as to the miseries which these emigrations entailed. The shipowners who contracted for their freight were under no supervision. At times complaints arose, and inquiries were made which proved that the ships were little else than floating prisons, on which the emigrants embarked only to die from starvation and disease brought on by the neglect of every sanitary precaution, or to be done to death by those who made a contract that would be profitable only if the majority of the passengers died before the voyage was nearly over.

Some alarm was caused about the same time by the threatened fall in the linen trade. From the beginning of the century until 1769 the trade had rapidly advanced. Its value to Scotland was enormously exaggerated, and a moderate amount of commercial foresight would have discovered that it could form no very decisive element in the nation's prosperity. Now it showed what was a slight, and, as it turned out, a temporary decrease, which was doubtless in part owing to the growth of other industries, and particularly to the rival claims of the woollen manufactures, which held promise of far higher moment for Scotland. But the alarm which this decrease excited was used in order to press a protective duty on imported linens. The attempt was unsuccessful, but no one sought to question the expediency, on general grounds, of such a

[1] In the *Scots Magazine* for 1774 (June) we find a letter from a certain Mr. James Hogg, giving this robbery and its encouragement by the neighbouring lairds, as the real ground for the emigration of himself and a large body who joined him from Caithness.

duty. The protection was refused only because other rival trades deemed it to give an unjust advantage over themselves. The interest of the consumer was as yet disregarded except in the arguments of the speculative economist, whose theories were only slowly to bear fruit.

In 1775 a new Parliament had met. Once more North could face with a secure majority an Opposition which could not somehow add to all its restlessness and ability of attack any power of attracting support from the nation. As before, the majority for the Administration was swollen by the contingent from Scotland; and in May of the same year, Henry Dundas, the son of one Lord President and the brother of another, was appointed Lord Advocate, sitting in Parliament as member for Midlothian. Henceforth, for nearly thirty years, the Administration, so far as Scotland is concerned, really meant Dundas. We shall have to follow his career, so far as it is directly concerned with Scotland, and we must discern his hand as the most powerful in her government, even when his attention was well-nigh absorbed in wider spheres. For the moment he had an easy task; but before he had been a month in office he had to take an active part in a controversy which might, but for the interposition of other events, have developed into one of the first importance. For long there had been grumbling at the absurdities of the Scottish parliamentary franchise. It belonged only to tenants holding directly of the Crown as superior, and had no necessary connection with the possession, much less with the occupation, of the land. But, on the other hand, the superior who held of the Crown could split his holding into many votes, and create what

were merely fictitious qualifications to such an extent as to flood the real proprietors. This could only be limited by the threat of the larger proprietors to create such fictitious votes up to the full extent of their holding, and so outdo their smaller competitors. Only rarely did a limitation even of such questionable expediency operate as a deterrent.

In this year an attempt was made to initiate legislation on the subject. The plan was started when Dundas was only Solicitor-General; but in the month of October, some five months after he became Lord Advocate, he presided at a meeting held in Midlothian for the discussion of the subject. When the discussion began, Dundas, with characteristic caution, refused to declare himself; he preferred to listen, for reasons which he would afterwards explain, to the opinions of others. These opinions were, by a large majority, in favour of the project, only Sir John Dalrymple and a few more speaking against it. When the vote had been taken, Dundas declared himself an enthusiastic supporter of the Bill. He had, he said, refrained from giving his opinion in case that of the freeholders had been different, and he had thus been compelled, at their behest, to act in Parliament contrary to his own convictions; but now that he could count on their support, he was determined to push the matter forward. His speech was one which savoured much more, indeed, of the Whig parliamentary reformer than of a Tory Lord Advocate in Lord North's Administration. "He hoped," he said, "to see the day when the nobleman of £10,000 a year would not disdain to take off his hat to the gentleman of £500; when he would seek to gain influence, not by a preponderating number of votes, but by the way in which

he did his duty to his neighbours, and thus deserved popularity." Dalrymple did not lessen his opposition, and prophesied that the Bill would meet with such opposition from men in power above that it would never pass into law. Dundas doubted the truth of Dalrymple's surmise, but at all events he would press the measure. The declaration is a curious proof of the slightness of joint responsibility then existing between different members of a Government.

The time soon slipped by when Dundas was disposed to preach parliamentary reform. The season for that passed for him, as it did for the greater statesman whose henchman he became. But the episode thus falling at the outset of his career is not less interesting in its personal application than as a symptom of a growing readiness on the part of the leading men of Scotland to advance from the lessons of local administration to provide something less absurd and anomalous than the existing parliamentary franchise. It is still more curious that the advocacy of the project should have come from Lord North's representative in Scotland, and that the opposition should come from one who counted amongst the opponents—so far as Scotland contained opponents—of the Administration.

Dundas came to power with every advantage of birth and natural endowment. He belonged to a family which had established a sort of prescriptive right to the great positions of the Scottish judicial Bench. Four generations of the family had succeeded one another on that Bench, and amongst them had been some of its chief ornaments. Personally he was a man of striking presence, with an impressive style of oratory, which his broad vernacular did not render less effective after the ear became accustomed to the emphatic burr. But

above all, he was a man born to direct and guide administration, and with quick insight to discover and attract adherents. His character stood justly high, and whatever the clouds that gathered about his later career, not even his enemies would pretend that he himself was guilty of any dishonourable act, or stooped to an ignoble device even amidst the chicaneries of politics. It would be idle to claim for him complete political consistency; but such a claim could not be made for any statesman of the time, and would be little to his credit unless as proving an almost adamantine strength of rigid obstinacy. Take him for all in all, the name of Henry Dundas is one of which Scotland may well be proud, not as a Scottish administrator only, but as an actor on a wider scene.

But whatever the personal ability of Dundas, he derived his influence mainly from the fact that he represented so completely the Scottish society of his day. He belonged to one of its most powerful families. To him, as to most of his compatriots, party divisions meant little, and he was mainly desirous of preserving the existing basis of society, and of advancing upon a course of well-planned national improvement, so far as this was consistent with the maintenance of the landmarks of constitutional government as it was then understood. He was thoroughly Scotch—in feeling, in sympathy, and even in peculiarities of manner and of diction; and even when he came to add to his functions as dictator of Scotland great achievements on a larger scene, he never lost these peculiarities. He was on terms of intimate and assured friendship with those who carried on the traditions of an older day. He had all the love of conviviality that marked his countrymen. He was in full sympathy with the Moderate party in the Church,

which comprised almost all that gave to her lustre and distinction. He was one of the most characteristic figures of a time in which Scotland was producing a new national type pieced together out of her past inheritance.

Let us take as instances two of those closely connected with him, representing peculiar features of the society of the day. One was Alexander Lockhart of Covington, who was at this time raised to the Bench by the legal title of Lord Covington. He was now an old man, having been born at the beginning of the century. His grandfather was the Lord President Lockhart who had been murdered by a disappointed litigant. His father was the well-known Jacobite, Lockhart of Carnwath, whose memoirs are a storehouse of information regarding the machinations of the Jacobite party, and the intricate network of schemes which attended its gradual decay. He had himself been in close sympathy with that party, but, like many others, on the accession of George the Third he transferred his loyalty ungrudgingly to the first native-born sovereign of the Hanoverian dynasty, and found a substitute for sympathy with a vanished cause in devotion to the throne. He was a man of aristocratic mien and manners, whose pride and superciliousness had been increased by long neglect at the hands of the dominant party of the Whigs. As an advocate he had been distinguished for zeal and versatility rather than for the balance of his legal judgment; and while his violent temper had involved him in frequent disputes, from which he did not emerge with his personal honour unimpaired, and although his passion for play had kept his fortunes low, he was still the object of much personal regard, and was deemed by many to have suffered un-

deserved neglect. On the urgent representation of Lord Mansfield, and with the support of Dundas, he was now raised to the Bench; and the appointment seemed to mark the readiness of the Government to obliterate those memories which kept the Jacobites in a state of proscription.

Another was a man of a very different cast—Robert Macqueen, afterwards raised to the Bench as Lord Braxfield. As the son of a local solicitor in Lanark, he could boast no aristocratic birth; and to the end of a long life he preserved unchanged the coarse and uncouth exterior that marked his origin. He was a man of boisterous manners, who carried his love of society into an excess of roistering conviviality from which all thought of decorum and of personal dignity was banished. To this he joined a massive force of application and a strength of intellect by which he towered above all his contemporaries. The incidents of a later day, when he was one of the most strenuous combatants against what were, or what were supposed to be, the forces of Revolution, have made him live to posterity as a sort of Scottish counterpart of Judge Jeffreys; but whatever the outbursts of a fiery temper and prejudices which he never sought either to curb or to conceal, his character appeared very different to his contemporaries. He was without literature, and showed an open contempt for the philosophical and speculative predilections of many of those amongst whom he lived. But his massive grasp of legal principles, his rugged sense, his acuteness, and his perspicacity won the respect even of his bitterest foes; while his abundant good-humour, his genial if coarse *bonhomie*, and his unfailing wit, made him beloved by his intimates. We must beware of trying such a man

by any standard based upon the staid manners and settled procedure of modern judicial usage. We must remember all the jealousies that he united against himself; the resentment of the *literati* against one who scouted their pretensions and had no sympathy with their pursuits; the rancour of his weaker contemporaries, whose chicaneries he detected and for the flaws of whose arguments he did not conceal his contempt; the condemnation of those who were shocked by the licentiousness of his language and the absence of all restraint in his conviviality; and, finally, the bitterness of a depressed and angry party, against whom he deemed it his duty to turn all the engines of judicial authority. But still we must accord to him the praise of a great lawyer, of a powerful intellect, of a man who resorted to no mean and petty tricks, and who rigidly pursued the ends of justice according to his lights. He too was one of Dundas's staunchest adherents.

But the day when a fiercer fight was to present the character of the leading men in a picture of more contrasted light and shade had not yet come. For the present, Scotland was occupied chiefly with careful and piecemeal efforts at her own advancement. The capital was gradually making herself more worthy of her name. Already the long-projected bridge over the Nor' Loch had added to the narrow limits that had sufficed for ages a large and increasing suburb. There was now a project[1] for adding to the space southwards by improving the access in that direction by a bridge over the Cowgate, as the depression on the

[1] Eventually carried out under the Provostship of Sir J. Hunter Blair, the partner of Sir William Forbes in the most notable firm of private bankers in Scotland.

southern side, flanking the saddleback on which the city was built, was called. The cost would nowadays seem modest, and is an index of what was counted a great enterprise in those days: it was estimated at £8600. But it was not suffered to pass without protests from those who preferred things as they were. It was prophesied that this extension southwards must, sooner or later, ruin the city. The new suburb to the north had lowered the rents obtained for the high-pitched tenements which crowded within the city walls. This further addition would lower these rents still more, until soon there would be no resources available for the necessities of taxation.

In 1771 an event took place which was not without significance for Edinburgh, when the foundation-stone of a new High School was laid with great ceremony, and when a project was begun which was hailed as a most hopeful one by all her leading citizens. It was an important step forwards in a sphere of which Edinburgh had good reason to be proud as that of her leading industry.

A change, tentative indeed, and hesitating at first, but with far more reaching consequences than the projects of the city Ædiles, was that which was accomplished by the legislation of 1775, which emancipated the colliers. It is strange, indeed, to read that only then was the condition of slavery abolished in Scotland. Scotland had obtained in 1701 her equivalent to the *Habeas Corpus* Act. But that Act expressly enacted that its provisions were not to extend to colliers and salters. Up to 1775 these labourers were serfs in the fullest sense of the word. They were cut off by the brand of slavery from their fellow-men. They were bound to the mine in which

they worked, and were sold as a part of the working machinery. Once a child was entered for the work, his liberty was no longer his own; and as the necessities of his parents allowed them no choice, the child of a collier was almost certainly a slave from his earliest years. Even when this stain upon Scottish civilisation was partially removed in 1775, the action of the Legislature was cautious and timid. For the existing serfs the period of emancipation was slow, and the end was only to be obtained by legal process, which was rarely within his power. It was only in 1799 that the last relic of this barbarism was removed.

During the rest of the decade the local affairs are of little moment. We read of a struggle between the Trades Guilds and the Town Council of Edinburgh, in which the former represented the more popular side, and which seemed to portend an attack upon the flagrant abuses of a close municipal government. The city member, Sir Lawrence Dundas, seems to have sympathised with the Town Council; and when the Trades Guilds complained of his betrayal of their interests, he could only plead that he felt bound to maintain a neutral attitude. The dispute lasted long, and it ran high enough to turn the election in 1780, when Sir Lawrence Dundas was defeated by Mr. Miller, an advocate, the son of the Lord Justice-Clerk. The defeat was a confirmation of the power of his namesake, Henry Dundas, and of the Duke of Buccleuch, of whose party Sir Lawrence had been one of the leading opponents, and whose anger he had specially aroused by being one of the seven Scottish members who supported Mr. Dunning's famous motion on the power of the Crown.

More than one dispute arose in which Edinburgh was fiercely fought by Glasgow and the Western shires as to the fixing of the price at which corn might be imported. No one—amongst practical politicians—then opposed in principle the prevention of importation when the prices fell below a certain standard. The question was only how that standard should be fixed. Before the Union this had been fixed from time to time by the Scottish Privy Council. By an Act of 1741 the power was vested in the Court of Session. In 1773 it had been transferred to the Sheriff of the county. A Bill was now proposed to restore it to the Court of Session, and thus provide greater fixity and security for agriculture. The struggle became one between the landed interests and the farmers of Midlothian against the growing manufacturing interests of the West. Glasgow urged that the price at which importation should be permitted must be low, and that the prices of the Edinburgh market, where agricultural produce was abundant, must not rule for all Scotland. The landed interest, on the other hand, felt their pockets threatened, and looked upon such pretensions as threatening the very constitution of the country.

But before the decade closed we find abundant symptoms that smaller local interests were waning, and that an era of fiercer party struggle was approaching. Opinions on either side as regards the justice and the expediency of the American War were becoming much more distinctly marked. The foreign complications of Britain were now brought home to Scotland in the most vivid way by the appearance of privateers on her coasts. When it came to the town of Leith being closely threatened by a flotilla under

that wild nautical adventurer, John Paul Jones (a renegade Scot from Kirkcudbrightshire, who sailed successively under the flags of America, of France, and of Russia), the excitement grew apace. The incident brought an outburst of patriotic vigour over the whole country. Town after town voted funds to fit out ships for the national defence, or provided bounties for seamen who would enlist for service. The pressgangs were busy, and perhaps these bounties were meant only to cloak a compulsory enlistment. But anyhow, they showed that the people were roused to the need of defending their coasts and homes. Once more an attempt was made to wring from the Imperial Parliament a measure for the establishment of a Scottish militia, and once more it met with a rebuff. But this did not stop the national zeal. The citizens began to enrol themselves as volunteers, and to stimulate their martial ardour by the platoon exercise, and by valorous marches through the streets with the magistrates and town officers at their head. Volleys were fired to show their indomitable courage, and the diversion was closed by cheers for the King, followed by an unlimited carouse. Throughout all parts of the country the foreign struggle in which the Empire was engaged began to excite a much more real and lively interest than when it stirred an occasional petition or address.

And as the martial feeling of the country grew, so the utterances of those who opposed the Government policy became more decided. The Moderate party in the Church were still able to obtain votes for loyal addresses to the Crown, in which the speedy crushing of the American rebellion was made the subject of confident aspiration. The close municipal corporations

for the most part followed the same strain of loyal invective against the rebels. But other notes made themselves heard. The Glasgow traders found the pressure on their nascent prosperity caused by the war as evere strain on their loyalty. Dr. John Erskine, the leader of the High-flying party in the Church, and one of her most respected clergymen, preached against the war, and found many sympathisers in a congregation which was the largest and most influential in the capital. When the chief question which divided English political parties began to form in Scotland opposing camps, which were divided also on the fundamental question of ecclesiastical politics, it was certain that these English parties would soon have their counterparts there.

In the year 1778 there arose the first tentative discussion of a question which was to have a much deeper influence on Scottish politics, albeit an influence totally out of proportion to its intrinsic importance. This was the question of the removal of Catholic disabilities. The question was one on which an agitation was proceeding at the same time in England. But instead of the division of parties on the subject corresponding in England and Scotland, it was in many respects fundamentally different. Many of the fiercest opponents of the Administration were in England in favour of the repeal of these disabilities. In Scotland, on the other hand, the mere suggestion of their repeal gave the opponents of the Government precisely what they sought for —the opportunity of an effective and popular attack on the Administration. In both countries the struggle damaged the Government, but in only one respect was the damage of the same kind. In both countries

they were charged with vacillation and temporising; but in England they were accused of insufficient vigour in suppressing the riotous outburst which the legislative repeal of the disabilities had caused; in Scotland the whole weight of the charge was that they had tampered with a design which would have delivered the country, in the opinion of the opponents of the measure, into the hands of the Roman Catholics, and would have wiped out a chapter of Scottish history which popular sentiment deemed the most glorious. The question of Catholic Emancipation wounded the Government through the Moderate party in the Church. That party had no reason to be ashamed of the part it played in the discussion; but it mistook the temper of the nation, and suffered a reverse in consequence, from the effects of which it never completely recovered.

It was in 1778 that the first talk was heard in Scotland of a Bill being contemplated which should bring such relief to the disabilities of the Catholics as had been given in England just before. No Roman Catholic could sit in Parliament or in any municipal body, nor exercise the franchise for either; and these disabilities it was now proposed to remove. But further than that, no Roman Catholic could hold property; no Roman Catholic could take part in the education of the young. These were restrictions which amounted to persecution, and it was suggested that they should be removed. Further, it was in the eye of the law a crime to open a Roman Catholic place of worship or to celebrate the Roman Catholic ritual. Usage had, in fact, relaxed this restriction, and Roman Catholic chapels had been built in some of the larger towns which had caused no offence

to a population who scarcely noticed their existence. It could hardly have been anticipated that the proposal to give them a modified sanction by the law should awaken all the slumbering rancour of religious bitterness. But more than this, the very presence of Roman Catholics in Scotland was forbidden by the law. No one could give them shelter for three nights without making himself liable to severe penalties. Any one lying open to suspicion of holding the tenets of that religion could be summoned and examined by the Presbytery of the bounds. These provisions of the law, indeed, it would have been absurd to enforce. It may well have seemed a mere act of constitutional decency to efface the remnants of such barbarous intolerance.

But on the first note of the intended change being sounded some alarm was felt. The memory of old religious fights, and all the fierce animosity which they had called forth, was slumbering, but was not dead. At first, however, the full extent of the feeling was not gauged. Those most prone to alarm put questions to the Lord Advocate, who did not scruple to avow that some such intention was entertained. For a time those who saw its justice and were anxious that a bad page should be torn out of the statute-book, were firm to their purpose. A motion was proposed in the General Assembly to protest against any such scheme, but by the influence of Principal Robertson and the Moderate party it was defeated. This did not, however, stay the fury of popular feeling, nor were the High-flyers dismayed at the defeat of their first attempt. They quickly saw that here, at least, they had the whole force of popular sentiment on their side, and that this was a lever which they might use with telling

effect against the dominant party. Dr. James Erskine found here a more telling theme than he had found in decrying the justice of the American war. In England the resistance had been slower, and when it did break out, it was chiefly confined to the more ignorant classes. In Scotland the outburst of Anti-Catholic feeling was at once clear and decisive, and it united on its side the vast majority even of the educated class. Under such stimulus, it is not surprising that the violence of the mob soon broke out. In February 1779, the Roman Catholics were the victims of lawless attacks both in Edinburgh and Glasgow ; not indeed of such appalling magnitude as soon after, under the insane leadership of Lord George Gordon, reduced London to a state of anarchy, but sufficient to show the fury of the people and to shake authority. In Edinburgh, a building in the Trunk Close, where a Roman Catholic Bishop resided, and where, as was reported, there was a Popish chapel, was burnt to the ground before the eyes of the city-guard ; and next day the house of a Popish clergyman in Blackfriars Wynd was attacked and plundered. The house of Principal Robertson, who had countenanced the motion for repeal, was threatened. He himself received letters announcing his coming murder; and the pillage of shops whose owners were reported to be Roman Catholics was a daily occurrence. The same scenes were enacted in Glasgow, and the magistrates could only temporise and endeavour to appease the mob by assuring them that the project of repeal was definitely abandoned.

The Government discovered too late the mistake they had committed, and that the forces of order were too weak to permit them to advance farther in the path they had chosen. Whatever might have been the

difficulty of pushing forward a scheme which at the worst was only premature, such vacillation was fatal. The assurances now given that the proposal was abandoned did not suffice to calm the feelings that had been aroused. A Society for the Defence of Protestant Interests was established. No alarm was too absurd to find credit with an angry mob whose fanaticism had been aroused, and whose ignorance suffered them to accept as true any fable which their leaders chose to invent. The matter was debated in Parliament, and the course of the debate showed how little connection there was between the opposition which the Government had to meet at St. Stephens and that which thwarted their plans in Scotland. At Westminster, Fox and Burke declaimed against the weakness of the Government that had allowed a fanatical mob to defy the law, and urged the duty of toleration and the urgent necessity of purging the statute-books of laws which were barbarous and out of date. Meanwhile the Scottish Opposition accused the Government of being in league with the Pope to betray the Protestant liberties of the country ; and one of the Scottish representatives, Lord Frederick Campbell, did not scruple to say that he would take every child of a Roman Catholic father from his parent's hands and compel his education in a Protestant school. Burke carried on a heated correspondence with one of the Opposition party in Scotland, who might have sided with him in denouncing Lord North, but who held the maintenance of the disabilities to be above all secular policy. This strange complication amongst their opponents did not, however, make the position of the Government any easier. They had abandoned their scheme, but in abandoning it they had inflicted a

deadly blow on their friends in Scotland. The Moderates had supported repeal on much the same grounds that the Tories seventy years before had granted toleration to the Episcopalians, because they hoped thereby to crush fanaticism. But they had miscalculated in their estimate of the forces which they had to encounter. They had mistaken a superficial latitudinarianism for a real abandonment of principles which the religious struggle of no ancient date had burned into the hearts of the people. They had not, indeed, to contend with the keen dialectical skill and enthusiastic conviction of the Covenanters; but the memories of these were reflected—albeit faintly and in a grotesque travesty—in the lawless fanaticism of an ignorant mob. The Moderates found themselves now denounced as Tories in politics and as Revolutionists in religion; and neither of these was a character which Scottish tradition tended to render popular.

Nothing remained but to bury the project with decency. Neither party had much to gain by prolonging it. The opponents of the Government counted amongst their party many who had no wish to appear as foes of toleration. An alliance with a lawless mob was inconvenient. A few were found, indeed, to defend the outbreaks of violence by saying that the Roman Catholics were there in defiance of the law, and that their places of worship, being forbidden by express statute, had no more right to protection than the known haunts of thieves and highwaymen. The more respectable of the High-flying party could scarcely countenance such incentives to robbery and murder; and even had they dared to do so, the outbreaks of the Gordon riots in London gave an object-lesson which could not be

overlooked. A last debate took place in the General Assembly. The project of repeal was admittedly abandoned, and the fight had to take place upon a sham issue. No one attempted to deny that the feeling of Scotland was, for the time at least, absolutely opposed to the scheme. To that feeling the Moderates professed to yield. So far as reasoning and eloquence went, they had an easy superiority over their opponents. They denied the danger of repeal; they vindicated their own attachment to Protestant tenets; they mocked the absurd fears which had been aroused in an ignorant mob. But all they could achieve was that the motion passed by the Assembly should be one of satisfaction at the abandonment of the scheme, instead of one denouncing its authors and exciting still further the alarm of the nation about imaginary dangers.

So ended a dispute in which the Government had rashly, and without an adequate estimate of the feeling of the country, adopted a scheme which had the sympathy of the very men who were the chief opponents of the Government in England, and had afterwards found themselves unequal to carry it through. The initial rashness and the subsequent vacillation of the Government had been turned to good account by those who were jealous of the Moderate party in the Church. The struggle left behind it a rancour of party feeling of which the next few years saw an amazing growth.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM 1780 TO 1784.

After the project for the repeal of the Catholic disabilities was effectually disposed of, the agitation died down, but it did not prevent suspicion from rankling in the minds of a large number of the people. The outrages of the mob in London, under the reckless leadership of Lord George Gordon, had indeed sufficed to turn all thinking men against excesses whose only possible excuse was the fanaticism of bigotry; but outrages did not alter the sympathies of the uneducated crowd, and still less did they modify the tactics of those who found in these sympathies convenient instruments for their own party purposes. When Lord George Gordon was brought to trial, the crowd was still in his favour, and the eloquence of Erskine, then in the full flush of his oratorical fame, and careless how he abused the forms of the court in his zeal for his client, was sufficient to extort from the jury a verdict of Not Guilty. To the mob, sunk in the usual ignorance, and misled by a more than usual passion of reckless faction, the verdict was no doubt congenial, and it must be recorded with shame that it was hailed with acclamation in Edinburgh, where the reception of the news was celebrated by bonfires and illuminations. It was a

new, and not a very healthy symptom, that the triumph of mob rule in England should arouse the sympathy of Scotsmen, who had been wont to look upon its excesses with the indifference of spectators. The Assembly of the Church still continued to pass loyal resolutions, in which the excesses of fanaticism were condemned. But amongst the mass of the people the Protestant Association was still predominant, and its effect on party feeling was not modified, as it was in England, by the fact that toleration was supported by such members of the Opposition as Fox and Burke. In Scotland, the Opposition, such as it was, found its best policy to be unmitigated persecution of their Catholic fellow-subjects, and supplied its necessary heat from the flames of popular fanaticism.

For ten years the Opposition had been noisy and energetic rather than powerful, so far, at least, as numbers went; but now the Ministry of Lord North was verging towards its fall. The war was dragging its weary length, uncheered by any notable successes and accompanied by increasing dangers and augmented taxation. Ministers spoke with uncertain and varying voices as to their policy and their intentions, and the resourcefulness and quiet humour of Lord North were no longer a match for the unwearied attacks of an Opposition that compensated its paucity in numbers by copious eloquence and amazing versatility in parliamentary fence. Scotland, indeed, was not greatly concerned in the party fight raging at Westminster; and her indifference to it was due partly to the political influence of Dundas, and partly also to the instinctive sense which Scotland still retained that the fury of faction was unsound, affected, and unreal. The mass of the Scottish people had no direct means of making

their influence felt. All the parliamentary electors in Scotland numbered little over two thousand, and many members of this select body held their franchise on an unreal and fictitious tenure. The men of real political influence could be counted almost by scores, and they were thoroughly under the guidance of those who held the reins of Administration. If the county elections were entirely in the hands of the territorial aristocracy, who formed almost a family of their own, the burgh elections were even worse. These were decided by the delegates from the various groups of burghs that formed each constituency, and there was not one of these delegates that had not his price, and that was not open to a deal with the highest bidder. And the highest bidder was almost certainly on the side of Administration. Popular feeling might, indeed, express itself by riotous assemblies and by attacks on property, but from any approach to free representation, in any form, it was rigorously excluded.

Yet it would be wrong to say that the predominant loyalty to Crown and Administration was forced upon Scotland against its own free-will, or that its only basis was the fact that political power was absorbed by a privileged class. Power was in the hands of a narrow and often selfish oligarchy, but on the whole that oligarchy represented the best feeling and soundest sense of the nation. Political influence was, indeed, in the hands of a small number, but in many respects that small number was singularly typical of the whole. The same characteristics and the same sympathies pervaded all society. The outburst of feeling antagonistic to Scotland at the beginning of the reign had left inevitable results. Scotland was driven in upon herself; her very isolation nursed all the strength of her

national feeling, and evolved a national individuality built upon traditions, homely characteristics, and the close sense of kinship that was ever intensely strong in her soil, and that now began to embrace the Celtic fringe which for ages had been divided by a marked contrast from the Lowlands. The very smallness of the country made the sense of nationality—or "kindliness" in its stricter sense—more strong. There was no wealth sufficient to create wide distinctions between class and class. Powerful as was the influence of birth and hereditary rank, it was an influence which pervaded all classes, and in which none was too poor to have a share. A distant cousinship made the bonnet-laird partake the feelings of his feudal superior, and he in his turn formed a link between the highest in the land and his own humble dependants, who shared the name and claimed the kinship of the great territorial magnates. Simplicity of habits combined with the love of hospitality was the habit of all alike, and every class was impregnated with that *bonhomie* which often degenerated into coarse and brutal excess. The meal-mobs and the occasional strikes of the labourers show that on the outer fringe of the social fabric there was growing up a discontented and hitherto downtrodden class who found the new conditions of life unsupportable; but it was as yet a small section, to which even a free system of representation on the widest scale then dreamt of by the most visionary reformers would have given absolutely no weight. On the whole, such wealth as the country possessed was fairly distributed. There was no extravagance of luxury and but little of grinding penury. The better class was alive to its duties, and was ready to give money and labour to works of philanthropy, if such philanthropy

involved no dangerous political principle. Scotland was without any representative system, but there is no reason to think that at this time, if any such system had existed, its political colour would have been in any way different from what it was.

Another effect of the smallness of the country was the concentration of social and political influence in the capital. The population of Edinburgh was not much less than eighty thousand souls—a number in excess probably of any four other towns in Scotland; but this preponderance in numbers only faintly expresses the preponderance in importance of the capital. Commerce had not yet grown to such an extent as to balance that influence by changing Glasgow into the second city of the Empire for financial weight. In Edinburgh was gathered all, or almost all, that was important for social weight, for administrative capacity, and for marked supremacy in literature and in thought. In population, if not in wealth, she could hold her own with any city of the Empire except London; and as a literary centre she was not only a second when there was no other in the race, but she could even prove an attraction for many to whom the literary coteries of London were open.

The society that gathered there was a singularly picturesque one. For generations it had dwelt in the rookeries of the High Street, pent so close that all the leading families might seem to be the inhabitants of a single wide-stretching tenement, where they were thrown into constant contact, and knew each other as the members of one great family from childhood to the grave. Slowly, and with a certain reluctance, some of the more innovating spirits had found homes in the New Town; but the Old

Town was still the central hive towards which their affection gravitated, or to which their patriotism clung. And it must be remembered that nowhere in the British Isles had any municipality roused such a sense of local patriotism as that which Edinburgh inspired in her citizens. The noble and the judge, the advocate and the clergyman, the well-to-do shopman and the porter or caddie, the sleek bailie and the captain of the town-guard—each and all dwelt in a city which was a veritable home to them. All were known to one another as familiar faces in the streets. Their physiognomy, their foibles, their dress, and the measure of their conviviality—all were a bit of the daily life of the city: the fame of some was the pride, the eccentricities of others the habitual amusement, of their fellow-citizens. Divided they might be in sympathies and in opinion, but they were members of one family, held together none the less closely because family affection was varied by domestic bickerings.

The very variety, indeed, was one cause of the closeness of this society, because it made it self-sufficing. Within the narrow circle was comprised every type. The Jacobite tradition still survived, and, no longer an object of suspicion or of fear, it became an element of picturesque romance. Defeated, hopeless, discredited, fast fading into the dim background of history, Jacobitism, nevertheless, held its place in Scottish hearts. None would have readily spared from Edinburgh circles the aristocratic dames who held the tenets of their ancestors, and who could defend them with nerve and grit. Even those who made no parade of public sympathy for such notions were proud of their friendship, and

acquired social importance if they could claim their kinship. With all their aristocratic pride, these ladies were tied down to no trammels of conventional habit. They presented every variety of demeanour, from the grave dignity of the *grande dame* to the free manners of the hoyden, who knew that no simplicity of dress or life could deprive her of the respect due to her birth. One and all preserved, with rigid tenacity, the marked peculiarities of Scottish diction, and would have scorned to debase her pedigree by affecting a language which was not that understood and used by the humblest of her neighbours. None deemed that poverty was an indignity, but all looked upon a certain measure of hospitality, however humble, to be the first and most essential object of such scanty means as she possessed. It was much the same with the male portion of the community. Ingrained habits of conviviality did not interfere with the dignity that enshrined the highest class; but the scenes to which it led effectually prevented that dignity from assuming an austere or stern pride. The dignitary issued forth in the morning to meet the ungrudging tribute of respect from his humbler fellow-citizen; but the carouse made him seek his home at night under equally deep obligations to the friendly guidance of the caddie, who respected him none the less because he had a fellow-feeling for his weakness.

Within this society there was a wide and healthy divergence of opinion. Amidst all the picturesque surroundings of tradition, the impulses which were to stir the new generation were as strong in Edinburgh as in any corner of the Empire. Religion was there as tolerant, speculative philosophy as bold, scientific dis-

covery as keen-sighted as in any country of Europe. Romance was already awakening a new or slumbering sense, and poetry was there learning to acquire a directness and simplicity which was to overturn the formal traditions that had prevailed throughout the century. In the poorest country to be found within any of the leading kingdoms of Europe, the foundations of the science which was to lay down the principles regulating the distribution of wealth were being propounded. It was a society self-centred, and yet keenly alive to all the larger movements going on beyond it. Its members travelled widely, but kept their hearts always upon home. It went abroad and studied others closely ; and in its turn received with hospitality, and yet with self-respect and pride, those who came to it to learn what it had to teach.

It was little wonder that for such a society the course of English politics had small interest or charm. The scorn and sarcasm of its southern neighbours gave to it, with all its diversities, one point in common, that of proud concentration, and the violence of English faction as displayed at Westminster only disgusted it. The name of Chatham had roused and attracted it. To the educated and those who were frequent visitors to London the names of Burke, and even of Fox, were familiar. But the Rockinghams and Shelburnes, the Sandwiches and the Cavendishes, emerging in all the tortuous political intrigues of the day, were names and names only to them. Loyalty to the Crown, and to the Administration as representatives of the Crown ; the firm desire to maintain the supremacy of the Empire, and to suffer no trafficking with revolution ; a fixed determination that even if political changes of detail were necessary, these changes should be carried out

on no revolutionary principle, and should involve no fundamental alteration of the constitution; a common persuasion that, however bold might be their philosophical speculations, there should be no disturbance of the State religion as an accepted article of belief and as a system of social police—all these were principles which animated the whole of this complex and vigorous society, whatever their differences of opinion in detail.

In the autumn of 1781 the whole nation was stirred by the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, which virtually closed the war. Naturally it led to the fall of Lord North's Ministry; but it is no part of our business here to discuss the question of his paramount responsibility for an issue of the war, as to the principle of which English political leaders had shown an almost bewildering variety of opinion, and in the conduct of which the Government had been assailed by every weapon which an unpatriotic faction could contrive. In Scotland, as elsewhere, the natural impulse was to lay the blame on the Ministers of the Crown.[1] The dominant note of Scottish politics was what was known as the Revolution Whig; and although that phrase was little more than a sort of high-sounding title to political orthodoxy, and was professed by many whose opinion diverged amazingly, yet the name and memory

[1] It would be hard to give any connected or consistent account of Burns's politics, according to the party shibboleths of the day; but he knew his countrymen's sympathies, and doubtless he expressed a prevalent feeling when he wrote in 1786 in the "Dream":—

"But faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye've trusted Ministration
To chaps who in a barn or byre
Wad better fill'd their station
Than court yon day."

of Chatham were powerful enough in Scotland to make the contrast between his triumphs and the failures of North a poignant one. But there was no such virulence of feeling as was stirred by the invective of party rancour in England, and still less was there any inclination to abandon loyalty to the Crown, or to despair of the possibilities of national defence. The martial ardour of the Volunteers was as strong as ever; and however easily such a movement lent itself to the sneers of those to whose political views it formed an impediment, yet it gave proof enough that the patriotic zeal of the nation was not abated.

It is true that amongst the Scottish members some who had before supported Lord North were now stirred to opposition, and joined in that natural condemnation which dogs the feet of failure. Sinclair, the member for Caithness, whose name emerges in so many spheres of activity during the next generation, and to whose officious versatility Scotland was only one of the many domains for the administration of which he deemed that Providence had made him responsible, had gone to Westminster in 1780 as one of Lord North's supporters. But for such a man the wire-pulling of party had irresistible attractions. He was not without merit, and certainly not without a kind of ability, unilluminated by the faintest ray of humour. But his fussiness knew no bounds. He had scarcely taken his seat in the House before he was making profuse offers of support to the Prime Minister. Within a few months he was busy over a reconstruction of parties, and was in correspondence with half the members of Parliament. Pamphlets poured from his new-fledged pen with bewildering rapidity. He was ready to gauge, and if need be to reorganise, the naval power of the country,

and doubtless, on an emergency, assume its command. Political economy had no secrets for him; he pursued statistics with the ardour of an infatuated lover, and he laid down the law with absolute conviction on every knotty question of financial policy. There was no possible sphere of activity upon which he was not at all times ready to thrust himself, and none in which, when once he had appeared on the stage, he did not deem it part of Nature's arrangement that he should take the lead. In 1782 it was only natural that such a man should take the Government most summarily to task. He had no doubt but that the ruin of the nation was impending, and as little hesitation in assigning the responsibility. But all Scotsmen were not quite so cocksure. Adam Smith—a consistent Whig, if ever there was one—replied to Sinclair's confident predictions of national ruin by words of wisdom—"Be assured, my young friend, there is a deal of ruin in a nation." Other Scotsmen besides Adam Smith waited the issue with some confidence, and were not disposed to strain the case unduly against the Ministry. Even Sinclair's new-born opposition zeal could not exactly guide him to certainty as to the composition of any Ministry that was to take their place.

In those who succeeded North, there was certainly little that could rouse the interest or stir the enthusiasm of Scotland. Rockingham's Ministry represented a strange union of the old Whig aristocracy, whose political creed was bounded by implicit faith in the divine right of the great Whig families, with the fresher strain of Whiggism now led by Shelburne, and claiming to represent the creed and inspiration of Chatham. Accident had brought these two parties together, but they hated one another almost more

than either hated North. In a few months Rockingham died, and the feeble tie which had held together a partnership so ill-assorted was broken. Shelburne became First Minister in July, and as a consequence Fox and Burke resigned. Fox's place was taken by Pitt, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and under this reconstructed Ministry the Peace of Paris was signed in January 1783.

Meanwhile a coalition had been formed between Fox and North in opposition, which amazed the nation, and played havoc with any claim which Fox could ever maintain to political principle. In February 1783 that coalition managed to snatch a victory from the Government. But the King refused at first to succumb to the fate which saddled him with such an ill-omened alliance. For weeks he sought expedients to escape from the necessity, and it was only when all expedients failed him that he consented to accept the Duke of Portland as First Minister, with Fox and North as Secretaries of State.

Amidst these kaleidoscopic changes Scotland had remained a puzzled, an indifferent, and latterly a disgusted spectator. She rightly deemed them to be symptomatic of the lowest degradation of party politics, out of which the country was to be lifted only by the rise of some transcendent leader. The intricate causes influencing such changes were secrets into which Scotland had neither the wish nor the means to penetrate. It was enough for her that, so far as the supreme interests of the nation were concerned, such changes were absolutely without significance. The logic of facts, too grim to be questioned, directed the course of Imperial politics, and dictated the terms of the Peace of 1783. In that Peace no Minister or set

of Ministers had any more real influence than the winds have upon the bare mountain tops across which they sweep. This or that concession of form was demanded by one Minister to save any flimsy pretence of consistency to which he might lay claim with regard to the American colonies. One had once thought that conciliation was expedient, but that the sovereign rights of the British Parliament must in the abstract be maintained. Another had thought the claims of Parliament overweening, and had advocated concession not only in practice but in theory. So they squabbled amongst themselves as to points of form—whether an acknowledgment of independence should or should not precede negotiations—and so on. Such quibbles were absolutely worthless in face of the fact that coercion had failed, that our armies were destroyed, and that the stern reality of defeat must be acknowledged. We may well be thankful that negotiations begun on a basis so compromising, and conducted amidst such factious bickerings in the English Parliament, did not result in even more humiliating concessions. What deemed itself enlightened opinion strongly condemned any attempt to retain Gibraltar; but, fortunately for the Empire, such self-appraised enlightenment failed then, as it may be hoped it will often fail hereafter, to move the instinct of the British race. Ministers might have surrendered the gateway of the Mediterranean at the promptings of party politics, but, fortunately, behind Ministers there stood the stronger barrier of popular judgment, unenlightened, but none the less decisive.

The fate of war had snatched from the scene the bone of contention which had served for party warfare for a dozen years. Factions were forced to turn to

other things. Ministers made spasmodic and feeble attempts to carry out piecemeal legislation. But they were divided and half-hearted, and without any guiding principle; and so far as Scotland was concerned, they refrained even from the attempt.

So long as the Rockingham Administration held together, and even during that of Shelburne, which lasted till May 1783, Scotland seems, on the whole, to have accepted the successors of Lord North with acquiescence, if not with any great cordiality. But the fact was that the changes down to the latter date left Scottish administration practically unaltered. It remained in the strong hands which had guided it since 1775. Dundas was Lord Advocate under Rockingham and Shelburne, as he had been under North. To pretend that by so remaining he was guilty of inconsistency is to bring against him a charge from which no politician of the day could be pronounced free. If Dundas had been consistent amidst all the various evolutions of party, he would have stood alone. For months the Treasury and the front Opposition benches were the scene of transformations to be equalled only on the boards of a theatre in the pantomime season, or by the shifting reflections cast by the quick-moving slides of a magic-lantern. Now Fox and Dundas faced North and Pitt; a few weeks later Fox and North were side by side, and joined in denouncing Pitt and Dundas; now Fox and Pitt were found supporting a project of reform opposed by Dundas; and before we have time to classify them anew we find Pitt and Dundas in one lobby, Fox in the other. What possible consistency could any single figure maintain amidst the maze of such a bewildering dance? Which

is in a position to accuse another of lack of allegiance to a principle?

But to advance such a charge against Dundas is indeed to misunderstand the whole position. During these strange years, a Minister really fulfilled a double *rôle*. He took his place in the rough-and-tumble contest of debate. In these debates it was doubtless recognised that each member of the Government should have a regard to the interest of the Government, and should do his best to maintain its majority. But how he was to do so was left to himself to judge, and the varying judgments of the different members of the Government often led them into opposite lobbies, and made them attack one another in debate. The bonds of administrative discipline were so loose as hardly to be felt, and their texture was so flimsy as to be almost invisible. In these parliamentary fights Dundas had no difficulty in reconciling his own independence with the very moderate concessions that had to be made to the demands of the Government Whips; but in the other *rôle* which he had to fill—that of administration—Dundas had a freedom of action far greater than that open to any other member of the Government. Under successive changes Dundas remained virtually king of Scotland, and within his own domain no one dreamed of attempting any interference. Under Shelburne and under Rockingham, as under North, Dundas was practically uncontrolled. When the Coalition of Fox and North held power for a few months, then indeed the position of Dundas became irksome, both for himself and for the English Ministers. It became evident that his place must be supplied; but so strong was his hold on Scottish administration that the Minis-

try hesitated and seemed to shrink from the change. Months passed, and Dundas still held the administration in his hands, and it was only on the eve of their fall that the Coalition Ministry replaced Dundas by Henry Erskine, who had a few weeks' tenure of the office of Lord Advocate before the advent of another and more enduring Administration. Before the close of 1783 the Coalition Government had fallen, and the shifting phases of degrading faction fight were ended in the accession to office of the man under whose rule England was to remain during the momentous years that closed the century. It was in December 1783 that the King took the decisive step that freed him and the nation from the debasing scenes through which it had passed—scenes in which one reputation after another was bartered away for a few months of deceptive power. For the time it looked as if the King had risked his authority by an unlucky venture, and as if the new Government would last only for weeks, if not for days. Pitt's acceptance of office as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer was laughed at as "a boyish prank." The schoolboy who had ventured to assume office in the teeth of an adverse majority was scarcely to be dealt with except by derisive sneers at the freak by which he presumed to wear for a few days the emblems of power. For the moment his arrogance was intolerable, but it would soon give place to amusement at his fall.

One man alone saw the probable issue of the game, and ventured all upon his loyalty to Pitt. Others might deride: Dundas alone never wavered in his firm belief that the future lay with the one man in Parliament who was born to rule. For five months Pitt had to maintain an unequal fight against a bitter and de-

risive majority. He could only maintain his position by a lofty and invincible pride. Derision changed to furious and almost inarticulate invective. The outraged faction, whose fury he treated with calm disdain, felt not the semblance only, but the reality of power slipping from their hands. They stood condemned before the tribunal of the nation, stripped of character and credit, and knowing that dissolution would carry them to ruin. Pitt was not to be hurried. He would vouchsafe no answer to the angry questions as to his intentions, save an absolute refusal to share his confidence with the House. For these five months this youth of twenty-five maintained the combat against an Opposition frantic with baffled rage. Night by night he found himself in a minority. All the eloquence, all the debating power, all the official experience was in the balance against him. His only aids were his own undaunted courage and the unswerving loyalty of Dundas. Dundas did not again assume the office of Lord Advocate, but, with the Treasurership of the Navy, which was to lead to still higher and more responsible office, he combined the supreme direction of Scotch affairs.

At length, in the spring of 1784, the dissolution came, and the new election gave Pitt a substantial majority and left his opponents a shattered and defeated remnant. The first campaign in the long fight that lay before him was now past. But the memory of these days of intrepid combat, when they two stood alone in the breach, was not to pass away. Henceforth the friendship between Pitt and Dundas was that of the comrades who had fought side by side in a forlorn hope. For more than twenty years it was to endure unshaken and ungrudging, and even

amidst the clouds that gathered round the close, foul suspicions and false charges might tear the heart-strings of Pitt and hasten his end, but they left the friendship unbroken even amidst the tragic surroundings of his death.

Under the influence of Dundas Scotland gave to Pitt in 1784 a majority even more decisive than that in England. It is true that Fox, prevented by the scrutiny from taking his seat for Westminster at once, found a temporary refuge in the constituency of the Orkneys, of which he was so eminently fitting a representative. The defeated representative of an English party assumed the character of the "carpet-bagger," which in later days has been so often found convenient. But this did not materially alter the political complexion of the Scottish representation, which remained a solid phalanx under the sway of Dundas, and upon which Pitt found that he could rely with an assurance not always to be placed upon his English supporters.

What, then, let us ask, was the secret by which Dundas was able to gather into his hands, and to place at the disposal of Pitt, what was, to all intents and purposes, the almost unbroken weight of Scottish opinion?

We have seen how strongly marked, how self-centred, and yet how full of diversities Scottish society was. Her national feeling, always strong, had been sharpened by the insults of English faction-mongers. She had no representative system, but such a force of national feeling as then prevailed in Scotland could not but tell even on the narrowest of political castes. Powerful as he was, Dundas could not have commanded Scotland, and determined her place in the struggle which

occupied the closing years of the century, had he not thoroughly understood her and been in the closest sympathy with her most characteristic traits. Of the society which we have described, it would be hard to point to a more striking representative than Henry Dundas.

The family of Dundas was one of the most ancient in Scotland, and was descended from a younger son of an Earl of Dunbar in the twelfth century. The immediate stock from which Henry Dundas was sprung had long been settled at Arniston, and had acquired a sort of hereditary rank in the judicial hierarchy. His own father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had all been judges of high repute. Early in the century an episode occurred in the family which showed that the hereditary Toryism of the race could, on one occasion at least, burst into Jacobitism. Henry Dundas's grandfather was a judge in the year 1711, and Edinburgh society, or a part of it, was much scandalised when his eldest son, James, who seems to have been a man of marked talent, but of somewhat turbulent moods, made himself the medium by whom the Duchess of Gordon presented to the Faculty of Advocates a medal of the elder Chevalier. The movement was too evidently a manifesto of faith on the part of the Jacobites, and as such it was treated, and made the subject of a remonstrance by the Hanoverian envoy. So inconvenient was the display, that the old Judge, to mark his disapproval of the action, made a will disinheriting his eldest in favour of his second son, Robert, who, to his own honour, destroyed the will, and declared his thankfulness that it had not lain concealed in his father's cabinet till his death, and then appeared to disgrace

his name.[1] The second son, Robert, became successively Lord Advocate, Judge, and eventually Lord President. As head of the Court of Session, he was probably the most powerful and respected representative of Scottish law in the century, and left the memory of a character in which the rugged national traits are most fully illustrated. In his court he ruled with the absolute sway of a tyrant, who made no attempt to conceal the contempt with which his consummate intellect treated those whom he deemed the drones of the Bench. He was a warm friend but an implacable enemy—moved by gusts of passion and yet a genial boon companion, and one who could act with warm generosity towards those who sought his aid. He was one of those Scotsmen of last century—and they were not a few—who combined an ingrained fibre of religious fervour with a life which, in some respects, seemed to defy public opinion in its freedom and license. To the outward observer, the dogmas of Christianity seemed to have but scanty weight with him; but he was a rigid Presbyterian, hated the Episcopalians with portentous vigour, and despised the philosophical discussions which occupied so much of the attention of the lettered Scotsmen of his day. The conviviality of the day he carried to an excess which was considered rather as a proof of a vigorous brain than treated as an outrage on decorum. On one occasion we are told that his orgies at a country tavern

[1] The elder son retired to France, but soon embroiled himself in a quarrel which cost him his life. Fancying himself neglected at some fashionable ordinary, he hired three places for the next day, and then appeared with two dogs which he seated on each side of him, and addressed as "Monsieur le Comte" and "Monsieur le Chevalier." The insult was resented by one of the company, who challenged him, and killed him in a duel.

were prolonged so late that his coachman burst into the room and declared that he would keep his horses waiting no longer, and the Judge was with difficulty dissuaded from avenging such a breach of the laws of good-fellowship by committing the man to the Tolbooth on the spot. Under his vigorous sway the business of the court was reduced to an order which it had never known before, and he carried to the bench the same impetuous logic, the same virile force, and the same contempt of any of the ornaments of diction, which had made him the most powerful and impressive of advocates. Not a few of his traits were repeated in his younger son, who was to become the most powerful Scotsman of the last years of the century.

The first Lord President died in 1754. His eldest surviving son was already high in office, and six years later succeeded to the place his father had occupied as Lord President. He possessed less than his father's force of character, but repeated his contempt of ornament in diction, his earnestness in promoting the efficiency of his court, and his plain and blunt commonsense. For twenty-seven years, from 1760 to 1787, he upheld the dignity of that court, and won high respect as an upright judge, although he seems to have had an unhappy faculty of running counter at once to popular feeling and to the preponderating weight of legal opinion. In the great Douglas cause his casting vote was responsible for a decision which roused the unthinking animosity of the Edinburgh mob, and which was upset on appeal by the consenting voices of Mansfield and of Camden. Once again, in 1778, he was found amongst the minority who withstood the arguments of his own brother in favour of the eman-

cipation of a slave who landed on Scottish soil, and again found his opinion set aside by the House of Lords, as it was inevitably bound to be in view of the decision recently given in a similar case in England. Although nothing was more alien to his whole nature than the principles of the Whigs, it is equally clear that he won but scanty love from the Tories, and earned from them only a somewhat grudging tribute of respect for his uprightness. He had no tincture of literature, and seemed to feel the jealousy of a rugged and narrow nature for those who were the chief lights of the brilliant society round him.

His younger brother, Henry,[1] was a man of another type, faithfully as he represented some of the family traits. When his father, the Lord President, died, Henry was only in his thirteenth year, having been born in 1742. He thus belonged to another generation from his elder brother, and the difference of age was not wider than that of position. He was educated entirely in Edinburgh, but he was distinguished even as a boy, and Edinburgh was no ungenial nurse to one whose intellect was quick and strong, although its destined field was to be one of action and not of thought. He was called to the Bar at the early age of twenty-one, and not his distinguished descent and powerful family connections alone, but also his own commanding ability won for him an almost immediate supremacy. At the age of twenty-three he became Solicitor-General. From that time his rise was rapid and unchecked. He was abundantly equipped for the fight. He was of commanding stature, with a countenance at once engaging and manly, with a voice

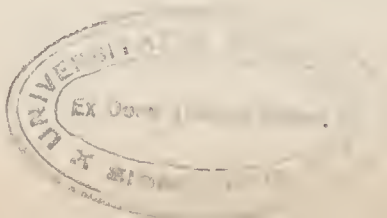
[1] By the Lord President's second wife, a daughter of Sir William Gordon.

that commanded attention; a debater of rare dexterity and consummate boldness, and with industry and pliability that knew no bounds. But his was not the pliability of servility or obsequiousness. Throughout a long fight, amidst all the cross-currents of politics, in prosperity and in defeat, as the unquestioned ruler of his country and when hunted down by the full pack of those who had courted him in his triumphs, he never for one moment showed one sign of fear, never bated one jot of his independence. He never schemed for promotion, but commanded it and accepted it as his unquestioned due. His reputation became the spoil about which contending forces raged, but not for one moment did he either supplicate the support of the Tories or attempt to mitigate the rage of the Whigs. If his aims were not exalted, they were at least worthy of respect; if his ambition was grasping, it was always manly. Early in his career he braved the frown of the King, who paid him the sincerest compliment—that of fear;[1] and in his last days he awaited with proud defiance the angry shrieks of popular obloquy.

It would be idle to claim for Dundas any very far-seeing scheme of policy or any deep-lying principle according to which he shaped his political conduct. He was steeped to the lips in the traditions and moods of the society amidst which he had been brought up, and the peculiarities of which, even in his strong and pro-

[1] "The more I think of the conduct of the Advocate of Scotland," wrote George III. to Lord North, "the more I am incensed against him. . . . Men of talents, when not accompanied with integrity" (to the King this spelt "submission"), "are pests instead of blessings to society, and true wisdom ought to crush them rather than nourish them." But George III. soon learned that the crushing process would not do with Dundas. "Let him be gained," he writes later to Lord North, "to attend the whole session and brave the Parliament."

nounced provincialism of diction, he rather flaunted than concealed. The Toryism which he represented was one shaped by the exigencies of party fight rather than by any comprehensive theories; and the contending speculations which were the sport and the excitement of the quick and lively Edinburgh society of his day were perhaps scarcely of a sort to exercise any profound national influence, or to impress the masculine vigour of a man like Dundas. But we find that before the clouds of the closing years of the century had gathered, and before faction had acquired the bitterness that belonged to it in that murky atmosphere, Dundas was not without sympathy for schemes of far-reaching reform, and that he had early aspirations not altogether unlike those that animated the earlier days of Pitt. In their earlier impulses they were perhaps not less akin than they became when, year after year, Dundas stood by Pitt's side and did him yeoman service in the thickest fights of a fierce and unrelenting warfare. Dundas never became a political leader. He founded no party; he represented no permanent constitutional principle; he transmitted to a later generation no inheritance but the memory of his own strong personality and indomitable courage. But in one respect his position was almost unique. Many of his countrymen remained in the narrow circle of their own capital, absorbed in its interests and enthralled by the intense personal animosity which political faction in a narrow arena inevitably engenders. Others forgot their nationality, and were engulfed in the struggles of the sister country, where their intrusion was not always guided by tact, and where it was almost always resented. Alone amongst them Henry Dundas remained a Scotsman to the backbone, and built his influence upon the unques-



tioned sway that for thirty years he exercised in Scotland; and yet he carved out a place for himself in the wider arena of Westminster; he made his hand felt in the guidance of the most vast of Britain's dependencies: he had so full and vigorous an influence in Imperial policy that even when Pitt, and Fox, and Burke were on the stage, the history of that policy cannot be followed without giving a large place to his name and to the part he played in it.

By his friends he was not only admired, but warmly loved. A genial companion, as that was understood in his own country, he did not find that the concomitants of such a character was interpreted in a sense very widely different in England, and the orgies of Edinburgh taverns were not an altogether unfitting preparation for the social festivities of London. To children he was a delightful playmate, and in later years the family of Scott used to beg successfully to be allowed the treat of sitting up to supper "when Lord Melville was to be the guest." When he revisited Edinburgh in the days of his greatness—when, as Scott writes, "the streets of Edinburgh were thought too vulgar for Lord Melville to walk upon"—he used to spend much of his time in climbing the lofty staircases of the Old Town tenements, to pay his respects to the old ladies who represented the monuments of an older and more picturesque generation, now passing from the eyes of a newer world.[1] In his friendships and in his enmities,

[1] Cockburn, who was his nephew by marriage, although the keen opponent of that political party which Dundas typified, speaks warmly of his kindness and playfulness with children. And he gives us a striking picture of Dundas's mother. "In the same chair, on the same spot; her thick black hair combed all tightly up into a cone on the

in his ambitions and in his fights; in his rough, unpolished, and even coarse, but always vigorous eloquence; in his prejudices and in his rough-and-ready, but not always keen or discriminating judgment;[1] in his imperviousness and in his truculence, there was always about him something massive and manly. His opponents might fear, but they never could dislike, much less despise him. His power was absolute. "Who steered upon him was safe; who disregarded his light was wrecked. It was to him that every man owed what he had got, and looked for what he wished." These are the words of a political opponent, who is, nevertheless, bound to add: "This despotism was greatly strengthened by the personal character and manners of the man. . . . He was a favourite with most men, and with all women. . . . He was not merely worshipped by his friends . . . but respected by the reasonable of his opponents; though doomed to suffer by his power, they liked the individual."[2] To literary

top of her head; the remains of considerable beauty; great and just pride in her son; a good representative, in her general air and bearing, of what the noble English ladies must have been who were queens in their family castles and stood sieges in defence of them."

[1] As an instance of this we may take his attitude towards Warren Hastings. He had himself started the attacks on Hastings, when their ultimate effect was not foreseen. Of the weightier charges he acquitted Hastings, but perhaps the earlier bias led him to form too quick a judgment on the others, or made him too impatient to seek for the proper explanation. There is little doubt that Dundas was the main cause of Pitt's compromising attitude in a matter in which firmness would have been not only more just, but also more politic. But it is impossible to read Dundas's private letters without feeling convinced that Dundas, in his prejudice against Hastings, was perhaps yielding to an indiscriminating judgment, but was honestly taking the view which he would have preferred *not* to take had he thought any escape from it possible.

[2] Cochrane's "Life of Lord Jeffrey," vol. i. p. 78.

discernment he made no pretence. His life was one of action, and it was divided over too many spheres, and immersed in too much of turmoil, to permit him to become one of the literary brotherhood of Edinburgh. But a discerning contemporary tells us, that[1] "although his brother and guardian, the Lord President, had been much alienated from the most distinguished *literati*, (Henry Dundas) no sooner approached to man's estate than he overcame all his family prejudices, and even conquered his brother's aversion, and, courting their society, soon became the favourite and friend of all the men who were eminent for learning or fine talents." And to have been the early patron, the warm friend, and the trusted leader of Sir Walter Scott gives him a connection with literature which is certainly not the least of the claims which Henry Dundas has upon the admiration of his countrymen. That admiration the ungenerous and spiteful revival of those charges of malversation which were so amply disproved is not likely to lessen. To recall them, not by explicit statement, but by half-veiled hints, is one of the meaner tricks which party animosity is loath to abandon.

Such was the man who now came to dominate Scotland in her domestic affairs, and to represent her in the scene of Imperial politics. Let us see some of the features of those domestic affairs during the earlier years of the long comradeship between Dundas and Pitt.

We have already noticed that Scotland had little sympathy with the "Patriots," who had attacked Lord

[1] MS. of Dr. Alexander Carlyle.

North and his Administration with all the ingenuity of party rancour. Here and there might be heard a note of opposition to the American policy of the Government, and anxiety had been expressed for conciliation; but such notes were rare, and such anxiety did not weigh very heavily. But as the pressure became more severe, the suspicion grew that "Administration" was not always wisely guided, and might conceivably cease to deserve support. Scotland was not ripe for any violent attacks upon the power of the Crown, and listened with indifference to the tirades against a profligate and corrupt Minister, whose crimes could only be expiated on the scaffold. All such invective it rightly considered as little more than stage-play. But, on the other hand, it was quite ready to accept the fall of North's Ministry as a well-deserved reverse, and to welcome the accession to power of the Whig Ministry of Rockingham, which included Fox and Burke. That Ministry commanded considerable support from the Moderates as well as the more extreme Whigs.[1] The Moderates had respected Burke and Fox for their support of the repeal of the Catholic Penal Acts. They were not sorry to see the near prospect of the end of an unfortunate war. Even when the death of Rockingham transformed the Ministry into one representing the other wing of the Whigs, and deprived it of the aid of Burke and Fox, it did not lose the general acquiescence of Scotland. It commanded at least that modicum of respect which is rarely denied to a Government that seems to have fair prospects of continuance.

[1] In 1784 Edmund Burke was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University—an election which would have been hopeless if the Moderates had been opposed to it.

The Moderate leaders found it expedient to court the new powers.[1] In the General Assembly of 1782 the more extreme party mustered courage to defy their Moderate opponents and propose an amendment to the Address to the Crown, which reflected strongly upon the Government of Lord North and praised the new powers at their expense.[2] The debate ran high, and was conducted with some vigour; and the proposal was defeated, not so much on the ground of absolute dissent from its opinion, as on the safer maxim that politics was no proper occupation for a Church court.

No political party in Scotland as yet questioned the sound orthodoxy of the Whiggism of the Revolution as a political creed, and the Ministry either of Rockingham or of Shelburne would no doubt have found in Scotland no considerable opposition, especially so long as the Scottish Minister was Dundas. But the coalition between Fox and North, under the nominal leadership of the Duke of Portland, was a strange portent, which could hardly be expected to be acceptable to Scotland any more than England. Its fate was scarcely doubtful. Dundas ceased to hold office, and for a few weeks Henry Erskine took his place. Fox's India Bill roused an opposition in which Scotland played her full share, threatening as that Bill did to destroy the privileges of a Company which had helped to enrich not a few of Scotland's sons. The Coalition

[1] Amongst the MSS. of Dr. Alexander Carlyle I find drafts of several letters addressed by him to Burke when in office.

[2] The proposed clause ran thus: "While your Majesty has taken into your immediate service men of the highest abilities and possessing the confidence of the people, we cannot despair of the public welfare; but hope that, by the blessing of Divine Providence, the dark cloud that hangs over the kingdom will be dispelled, the dignity of the Crown maintained, and peace speedily restored."

Ministry was indeed no more than a passing episode. The accession of Pitt first to office, and, after the election of 1784, to unquestioned power, opens to Scotland a period which certainly offered pre-eminence, and which seemed at first to offer the prospect of peace, prosperity, and reform, during which her resources might be extended, abuses amended, and the faulty parts of her economy set in order.

No part of that economy required more careful handling than the Church. The Moderate party had gradually acquired sway, and had devoted itself to maintaining the Erastian principle, believing that in the supremacy of law lay the best hope of real liberty in the Church. It had vindicated the rights of the patrons, and claimed, with some justice, to have raised the whole character of the Church for learning, dignity, and orderly procedure. The Church had under their *régime* proved itself the free and independent ally of authority, and could demand as its due an equal measure of consideration from Ministers. But it had never truckled to political intrigue, and, with wise foresight, had never forgotten to make itself, while the ally of Government, at the same time the fearless assertor of Scottish equality.[1] What was the position now, and what course did it behove Government to pursue? Let us recall the main features of the Church's history during the century. The restoration of Presbytery with the Revolution had found her people exasperated by persecution into fanaticism, and led by a clergy whose past history had been adverse to learning and moderation, and whose present circumstances compelled them to reflect in their own lives and in their teaching

[1] No class of men spoke and wrote more strongly in support of Scotland's claim to a militia of her own than the Moderate clergy.

the fanaticism of their hearers. Popular election had made them the humble servants of their hearers, and they were neither fitted by education nor character, nor free by their position to adopt any other attitude. In 1712 had come the Act restoring patronage, but for nearly thirty years patronage had been little but a name. It had been exercised with timidity, and it failed to restore the clergy or to enable them to rise to a position of freedom and independence of the prejudices of the mob. In 1739 came the Secession, to the leaders of which we may ungrudgingly concede the praise of high aims, of sturdy independence, of unselfish adherence to what they believed to be a duty of conscience. But it is none the less true that by the Secession of 1739 the Church was freed from a party that had been a clog upon her advance and a hindrance to her usefulness, to her dignity, to her self-respect. The rancorous fanaticism which had eaten so deeply into the vitals of Scotland was still rampant, and still checked the spread of intelligence and the freedom that might break through the clouds that darkened the life of the nation. But now a period of greater freedom and liberality began. The lay patrons selected their nominees with care. Men of position and education found a career open to them in the Church. Her ranks were filled with the most promising of the younger men. Education and culture were no longer a bar, and the clergy began to take their place as one of the leading sections of Scottish society. In history and in philosophy, in science and in poetry, she could point amongst her clergy to men who had won conspicuous fame, whose names were known far beyond the borders of Scotland. She was proud to attract to her courts and to count amongst the laity interested in

her government the leading men amongst the landowners and the great lawyers, and even amongst the higher nobility. Whatever there was of light and leading in Scotland was counted in the ranks of the Scottish Church. Hers was not a position of bated breath and whispering humbleness, and she had no need to stoop to the conciliation of the mob. Fanaticism and superstition were no longer her characteristics. The meeting of her General Assembly, which took place every May in Edinburgh, was one of the most important functions of the Scottish year. It was attended by all the pomp and ceremony which surrounded the Lord High Commissioner who represented the Crown, and whose office and function were the only relics that remained to the Scottish capital to remind her of the days when she had possessed a court of her own. Within one of the aisles of the ancient metropolitan church of St. Giles there gathered all the intellect and ability which Scotland could produce, and on that smaller stage there took place debates which might even rival that of St. Stephens, and which were the best nursery for eloquence and skill in oratorical fence which Scotland had to show or which could be found in any corner of Great Britain. From every burgh and from every Highland glen there came representatives, to mingle uncouth provincialisms, and to show that the Doric of the capital was not the only variety to surprise an English ear. They carried away from these discussions a sense of the weight and dignity of their Church and sound lessons as to her authority and her intimate union with the Law. The debates were under the guidance of her leading clergy, with whom the nobility and judges did not disdain to mingle, and to stand as the victors or the defeated in

honourable contest. From that centre there stirred a pulse that was felt throughout the remotest corners of the land.

But prosperity and ease had produced their natural dangers. Patronage ceased to be exercised with the same discriminating care. The laity became careless and indifferent, and often chose for the nominees men who were their humble tools. The patronage of the Crown was often made a tool of political jobbery. The better amongst the Moderate party were as averse to such servility as they were to the domination of the mob. They desired that the law should be supreme and that order should prevail; but it was to be for the good of the Church, not in order that the Church might be the slave of political intriguers. They desired that their Church should be the proud ally, not the humble dependant, of a political party.

Naturally the opposite party—the High-flyers, or the Wild Party, as it was called—found here their opportunity. Once more they hoped to regain some of their lost influence. They sought for an augmentation of their stipends, not by process of law, and not by the judgment of the courts that could increase clerical incomes as circumstances permitted, but by a bargain which would have sold the legal privileges of the Church in turn for a meagre but universal increase of stipends. The Moderates opposed this, and sought rather to create within the Church a few dignified, and, as things then counted, almost lucrative positions, which would have attracted sufficient men of eminence to give a character to all the clergy. Once more the High-flyers sought to petition Parliament against patronage, and were only prevented from doing so

by the firm resistance of the Moderates. The opportunity was taken by the Moderates to expunge from their records an annual reflection on the evils of patronage, which from custom rather than conviction had been allowed to remain as a yearly ceremony of absolute insignificance. Its removal once and for all was a triumph not only for the Moderates but for common-sense. But that party had not always the upper hand. Only a year or two before, the extreme party had proved their power by truckling to the fanaticism of the mob, and refusing to consent even to a very moderate toleration to the Roman Catholics.

The wiser spirits in the Church saw the danger, and warned the new Ministry in no doubtful tones.[1] There must be no abuse of patronage, either on the part of the Crown or of the lay patrons. Nomination must not be given as a means of securing a parliamentary vote. The leading laity must be urged to take part once more in the deliberations of the Assembly, the triumph of the High-flyers in the matter of the Roman Catholic disabilities having been largely due to the abstention of the most prominent laymen. In the exercise of their patronage the Ministers of the Crown must carefully consult the leading men of the Church. For the principals and professors of the Universities they must choose men well affected to the present Establishment. They must not forget the duty of attracting men of ability to the ranks of the clergy, not by a general scheme of augmentation, which would

[1] Amongst the MSS. of Dr. Alexander Carlyle I find a careful memorandum on the Church drawn up for the information of Pitt in 1784, in which the dangers are described and remedies proposed. They are such as are noticed in the text.

only excite the jealousy and fears of the landowners, but by a well-considered scheme of improving the pay of some of the leading positions within her pale. By this means, and by this means alone, could they find the Church an independent, and therefore a safe and trustworthy, ally against that fanaticism which, alike in religion and in politics, was a tendency towards which the Scottish character was only too prone. Such a policy may be applauded or condemned, according to the sympathies of the reader; but the aims of the Moderate party are at least stated by themselves with no ambiguity, and with no attempt at concealment. On such a fair statement they based their claim to the support of what appeared to be a strong, a permanent, and an enlightened Administration.

In regard to other matters, we can trace a desire to heal old feuds and to draw together parties before divided by the memory of old wrongs, so that the country might the better enjoy the prospect of advancing prosperity. The Jacobite party was now but a shadow of its former self, out of which all real danger had departed. It lived only in the fast fading memories of a few of the older generation, and the romantic dreams of some who clung to an inherited belief; but it had not vitality enough to threaten any active measures. The old racial differences were buried and forgotten, and a generation had laboured with no small success to bring the Celtic and the Lowland inhabitants more closely together. With the abolition of the hereditary jurisdictions, the clan system had become little more than a name; and the chief economical difficulty of the Highlands was, indeed, that the proprietors learned with too great quickness to divest themselves of the character of chieftains, and

to assume that of rack-renting landlords. The Church, and other agencies besides the Church, had been busy in labouring to improve the lot of their Celtic countrymen. They had spread amongst them new industries; they had promoted agriculture; they had stimulated mental interest and intercourse. Thousands of Highlanders had joined the army: the number of recruits was reckoned at 10,000 a year; and on a hundred battle-fields in India and in America the blood of Highlanders had been shed to cement the bond between them and their southern brethren. It was rightly judged that the time had come when old proscriptions should be ended, and when forfeitures which had been redeemed upon many a stricken field should be restored. Accordingly one of the first Acts of Pitt's Government was that by which Dundas restored to the representatives of their old owners the forfeited estates which were vested in the Crown. The amount of revenue was not large; but the spirit of the Act was one of conciliation, and it was not thrown away. In 1784 the last of these estates was restored to those who could establish a hereditary claim, and a truce was called in a civil war which had spread its fitful efforts over well-nigh a century. The Act was not passed without some grudging voices, including that of Thurlow, being raised against it; but it was placed upon the Statute-book without real difficulty. It appears that some effort was made about the same time to remove some of the attainders and to restore the titles to the descendants of those who had forfeited them. The sullen opposition of Thurlow was this time successful, and the effort was abandoned; nor did it meet with more success when it was renewed a generation

later.[1] But something at least was done to wipe out memories of a fight the bitterness of which had passed away.

Another and more sentimental grievance was removed in 1783 when a Bill was passed repealing the Act of the 19th year of George II., by which the Highland dress was proscribed. The original Act had been prompted by a singularly childish animosity, and its maintenance became little more than an absurdity when the dress had become the symbol to the world of all that was most courageous and most loyal in Britain's "far-flung battle-line."

It may be well to anticipate by a few years, in order to deal with another instance of a similar desire to obliterate old penal disabilities. The Episcopal Church of Scotland had, as a whole, been staunch in its Jacobitism, and had maintained a ghostly adherence to a political creed which it had been powerless to advance. Gradually its political keenness had melted away. It had earned real respect by the elevated morality and lofty tone of its clergy, and had gathered about it an increasing number of the more highly educated class. The closer that the connection with England became, the more natural did it seem that many of those who had ties with England should find it congenial to use a liturgy which, in the main, was framed on the model of the English establishment. By the dominant party of the Scottish Establishment it was neither feared nor disliked, and they avowedly sought to extend to it a fuller measure of toleration. The older nonjuring Bishops were one by one gathered to their fathers, and Episcopal chapels, whose congregations had no thought of Jacobitical conspirings, were established in great num-

[1] See Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vol. vii. p. 28.

bers. All things pointed to a settlement, and when, in January 1788, the death of the young Chevalier removed the last real claimant who might have revived expiring loyalty, all difficulty seemed to be removed. The Bishops of the Episcopal Church, in a solemn synod, pledged themselves to use the prayers for King George. In the spring of the following year they petitioned Parliament for relief from penal disabilities. Again the grudging temper of Thurlow stopped the way. A Toleration Bill was stopped by him in the ensuing session, but at last, in June 1792, it became law, and the ill-fated but romantic association between Jacobitism and the Church which had longest maintained the forlorn cause of divine right was broken for ever. When Scottish Episcopal ordination was by statute made a valid qualification for the holder of a living in the English Church, the Scottish Establishment placed no bar to the enactment.

Another sore still rankled in Scottish breasts, this time not confined to any one party. Again and again, since the establishment of the militia for England, Scottish patriots had claimed the same rights for their country. Again and again it had been denied. The burden of the taxation; the danger of placing arms in the hands of disaffected persons; the hindrance that it might prove to advancing commerce, and the restriction it would place on the labour market—all these had been urged as pleas against it, and for many years they had found strong support even among Scotsmen. But gradually the opposing party in Scotland had become less numerous. The danger could no longer be alleged to exist. All Scotsmen of light and leading—including Henry Dundas, whose elder brother had formerly opposed it—were now advocates of the militia; and its

opponents in the English Parliament were chiefly those who dreaded its interfering with the fruitfulness of Scotland as a recruiting field for the regular army. Year by year the feeling became more strong; nor was the desire for a measure which might not only secure Scotland against invasion, but which might teach her sons to give a good account of themselves, in any way assuaged by the raising of some regiments of Volunteer Fencibles. On the contrary, this was looked upon with some jealousy as placing undue power in the hands of a few wealthy landlords. The constitutional right of Scotland to a force which would give every Scotsman in rotation some experience in the use of arms was keenly urged. In 1782 a Bill with this object was again promoted. But by English influence there was tagged to it the condition that the Scottish militia should not be merely a reserve citizen force, but that drafts should be made upon it for the regular army. To such a condition its supporters refused to submit, and once again the Bill was lost. Not until the year 1797 did it become part of the constitutional forces of the Crown on the same footing as the English militia. Amongst those who had fought for it most strenuously by his pen may be counted Dr. Alexander Carlyle, the doughty minister of Inveresk. To him it was not only a constitutional right, not only a defence and a security, but a school of manliness from which he would not have his country shut out. The landowners complained of it because of its expense; the merchants because it interfered with trade; the politicians because of its danger; the political economists because it seemed to err against the fundamental law of division of labour, which bade a soldier be a soldier and nothing more. All their fears and fancies Carlyle roughly pushes aside.

As a minister of the Church Militant he would have his country strong; and he was convinced that the strength was to come not by a few companies of Volunteer Fencibles that allowed the wealthier class to play at being soldiers, but by a systematic and extended military training that would permeate every class of the nation.

With steady courage, and under enlightened guidance, Scotland was thus healing her old sores and asserting her national rights. Her Church was well ordered, her literature stood high; she no longer held herself aloof in sullen isolation. Her material prosperity was increasing apace. Towns that a few years before were of a size that nowadays would scarcely entitle them to be called more than hamlets, were advancing in population, in wealth, and in luxury of living. Edinburgh was on a par in population with any other city except London; and in all else she held a position which she shared with London alone, as a centre of thought, of literature, and of social interest. A contemporary writer[1] has left a comparison, based on personal observation and a study of facts, between Edinburgh at the beginning of the reign and Edinburgh on the eve of Pitt's long Ministry. At the beginning of the reign it was almost confined within the city walls. It was now spreading on every side, and had added a large and luxurious city to the pent-up closes of its ancient Castle rock. Two millions sterling, it was estimated, had been spent in building within twenty years—more than three times the whole currency of Scotland at the time of the Union. The houses which had sufficed in 1760 for the nobility and judges were now despised by all but the humblest

[1] In the *Edinburgh Evening Courant.*

classes. In 1760 a stage-coach set out once a month for London, and consumed fifteen days upon the road. Now there were fifteen coaches to London weekly, which made the journey in four days. In 1760 literary property was hardly known; since then Hume had earned £5000 for the concluding portion of his History, and Principal Robertson had made £4500 by one only of his many works. In place of the wretched change-houses which had received the traveller in 1760, he now found hotels where every luxury was obtained. In 1760 a scanty market had been supplied chiefly by travelling vendors, and any sudden strain produced a dearth. In 1782 a fleet of 600 merchantmen and several sail of the line had lain in Leith Roads for two months without affecting the Edinburgh market prices by a single farthing.

It is true that all this marvellous advance was accompanied by increasing luxury, and by some relaxation of a severe and primitive morality. Such changes are always apt to be exaggerated by those whose temperament leads them to look with nervous apprehension upon a code of morals which differs in any way from that to which they have been used. A dark picture is easily drawn, and it is scarcely the interest of any contemporary to raise a doubt as to its truth. The stricter and more formal ethics, which were identified with a narrow scale of living and were fortified by a restricted religious creed, had certainly passed away. The dominant party in the Church had perhaps been somewhat inclined to identify strictness with hypocrisy, and deliberately encouraged a freedom in religious thought and an emancipation in the more precise social usages which might give rise to scandal. But it would be absurd to pretend that any real laxity in

morals prevailed to any extent in Edinburgh during the closing years of the century, however gloomy was the picture which officious moral censors might draw, and however rigid were the maxims which the revival of religious enthusiasm and fervour prescribed. Compared with any modern capital, the conventions of Edinburgh society in 1784 would probably seem unduly severe.

Such a state of society as we have described naturally gave rise to projects of what seemed safe and necessary political reform. One subject above all occupied the public attention, and met with much encouragement from the political leaders—that of a reform of the political representation. The scandals of the existing system were patent to all. The burgh members were elected by narrow municipal bodies which were self-chosen, and which were corrupt to the last degree. For the thirty county representatives there were less than 2000 constituents, and many of these held the franchise upon the most absurd and iniquitous custom, by which the freeholder could split his superiority and create a number of purely fictitious claims. Meetings were constantly held during these years to denounce these iniquities. They met with almost no defenders, and the foremost men in the Administration were in full sympathy with these denunciations, and were pledged by their own past action to take vigorous steps to remove the wrong. Dundas himself shared with Pitt the honour of being an early advocate of parliamentary reform, which would almost inevitably have brought municipal reform in its wake. Even those whose privileges were attacked could oppose nothing to the rising wave, and busied themselves only in making the best

of opportunities that their own consciences told them must be shortlived.

Such was the position and such the prospect of Scotland at the opening of the long Ministry of Pitt and Dundas. We shall soon see how the sky became overcast, and what storms were brewing.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TORY AND WHIG PARTIES IN SCOTLAND.

The early years of Pitt's Administration were, for Scotland, years of ease and prosperity. The cessation of the war had lowered prices and opened new markets, and in every sphere of industry prosperity was advancing rapidly. Edinburgh was spreading fast, far beyond the old limits of her narrow lanes and lofty tenements. The manufactures were thriving, and the American and West Indian trade had resumed its old prosperity. Glasgow was no longer "a neat little town" on the banks of an insignificant stream; it was already showing signs of its coming commercial importance, and the new canal, as well as the deepening of the Clyde, was opening to it new markets. Already on a little loch in Dumfriesshire experiments were being made, in a very small and humble way, at steam-navigation, which was destined before two generations had passed to make Glasgow the centre of rich-stored argosies, trading with every corner of the habitable world. The woollen trade was thriving in the Lowlands; the wealth hidden in the coal and iron of the soil was being rapidly discovered; and even for the Highlands new advantages were dawning in the quiet extension of sheep-farming and in the English market for black cattle. The distil-

leries, which also found their chief market in London, were increasing rapidly. Agriculture, under the guidance of enlightened pioneers, was making satisfactory progress. The old "run-rig" system of cultivation was rapidly disappearing, and the proper rotation of crops and the use of chemical manures was accepted by the great majority of farmers. In these years the capital of the Bank of Scotland, which but two generations back had been only £100,000, rose to £600,000, and its shares were sold on the London Stock Exchange at more than 100 per cent. above par. The little town of Paisley, which had now obtained a canal of its own, and thus secured a waterway to distant markets, was now a great manufacturing centre, to which English capitalists were attracted in almost as large number as the Scotch. Under the stimulus of advancing commercial prosperity some recklessness of speculation was inevitable, and the heavy taxes rendered necessary by a long and unfortunate war caused some uneasiness. But on the whole, the nation might well congratulate itself on a flowing tide of wealth and of commercial activity.

New luxury in the style of living, as a matter of course, followed upon the heels of this prosperity. Mansion-houses of greater pretensions, and with all the appurtenances of art and modern contrivance, were springing up. Increased rents rendered the landlords a more wealthy class, and this consoled them for the loss of so much of their old importance, of which recent legislation had stripped them. The old convivial habits still prevailed in all their unconstrained coarseness; but they were compensated by the zest and energy with which social intercourse was indulged. The old lines of demarcation in manners and in language were

still preserved, and the colloquial dialect, even of the highest classes, was such as would not be understood south of the Tweed. But this did not prevent Scotsmen from sharing to the full in the thought and literature of England, while they cherished with reasonable pride that which was distinctively their own. The most intellectual among Scotsmen were cosmopolitan in spirit, but they bated no jot of pride in their own nationality, and pursued with new vigour their researches into Scottish antiquities and their interest in the vernacular literature.

In religion the old characteristics seemed to be well-nigh effaced. The old parties of the Moderates and High-flyers were still maintained, but the Moderates dominated the Church and imposed their authority upon her councils. The Dissenting bodies still held their own, but their efforts were comparatively lax, and they made no way in the present mood of the nation. The old rigidity of doctrine had disappeared, and the ordinary discourses of the pulpit resembled moral prelections rather than doctrinal expositions of religious faith. Some years before, the keen and bracing mood of English dissent, as preached by Wesley and by Whitfield, had stimulated and invigorated the nerves of the Scottish dissenting sects. But the country was not prone to import its religion, and the stimulus had passed away. A strange and wild outburst of unthinking popular fanaticism had for a short time burst out under the ignoble influence of a female religious leader of the name of Buchan, and had found in the south-west of Scotland—long the chosen home of the Covenanters—a congenial soil. Its votaries had believed themselves exempt from death, and implicitly accepted the assurances of their mad leader that with

her they would be sharers in Elijah's lot, and would be rapt to heaven by supernatural agency. But they made no permanent impression, and the brief and spasmodic ravings of fanaticism rather served to accentuate the prevailing tone of easy and tolerant latitudinarianism.

In Edinburgh, above all, intellectual activity was strong. The political economy of which Adam Smith was the chief apostle was exerting a powerful influence over the minds of the younger generation. The Scottish Philosophical School was devoting itself with increased assiduity to speculation as to the principles which underlay politics and society. The Church was too strongly Erastian in spirit to claim any domain as exclusively her own. Patronage was readily extended to dawning genius, and, under the smiles and favour of those who found literary patronage a pleasant and congenial adjunct to social life, influences were growing up which were destined to touch new chords of national sentiment.

It was into such a society that there burst, suddenly and unannounced, the meteor-like genius of Burns. His opinions followed the lead of no party, and were independent of the mood of any age. Jacobite and democratic, Calvinist and Socinian, strongly national by tradition, and yet cosmopolitan in mood—his views defied all classification, and were moulded into definite form only by the fire of his own temperament and by the indomitable might of his genius. Even while he felt its limitations, he revelled in the easy and pleasure-loving mood that prevailed in the social circles of Edinburgh, and accepted, half in contempt and half in gratitude, the flattery of their welcome. Combining the moral earnestness that must lie in the recesses

of genius with the moral waywardness that is often entwined with its fibre, he found in that flattery at once a stimulus and a snare. He felt its emptiness and its superficiality, but he could not resist indulging his senses in its incense; and even while he was inspiring into the veins of the nation a new impulse, and rousing its nerves to the tension necessary for a great upheaval of social change, he was himself in part a victim to the applause of those whose delusions his genius was to dissipate.

It is hard to conceive an atmosphere more inspiring for the generation then growing up. The fashions of a bygone age had not passed away, but they were held with the genial ease of those who thought them indisputable, and knew them unassailed. There was but little of angry contention where all were practically of one mind. The range of society was large enough to embrace many varieties, and yet small enough to permit of the unrestrained freedom of social intercourse, where each man was known with all his idiosyncrasies and foibles, and not merely as the particle in a social mass that rubbed its edges smooth in the monotony of social convention. Religion was regarded only as a safe and decent appurtenance of life, and was stripped of its sternness and its rigid terrors. There was a wide and fairly prosperous middle-class, which recognised its leaders and submitted to their authority, but where no man towered so high in wealth, or rank, or intellect as to be unapproachable by his fellows. Scotsmen could win great place and power in England, could share in all that England had to give, and could exercise a dominant part in the government of her newly consolidated Empire in the East; but they had still the proud possession of their own exclusive past; and now

the genius of Burns was breathing into the Scottish Muse a fire and a vigour that were to be the harbingers of new feelings and new impulses far beyond her borders. Such was the Scotland which Henry Dundas was to sway, partly by the vigour of his own indomitable common-sense and the athletic thews of his manhood, partly by the completeness with which he represented her dominant mood.

It was only natural that, in such a state of society—were it only as a sign of its energy and as a reflection of its advancing prosperity—there should be projects of reform. These were directed chiefly to the correction of the undoubted abuses that existed in the burgh administration—partly the effect of long-standing institutions which belonged to a system that was obsolete and unsuited to the time, partly of corruption which had crept in by vicious habit. The "sets" of the burghs, as they were called, or the charters under which they were governed, were in most cases more than three hundred years old, and were based upon a somewhat doubtful traditional authority. They reflected a state of politics and society which had long been covered over by the dust of ages. In these earlier times the burghs were little more than appendages to the estate of a powerful neighbouring proprietor, and it was not surprising that the scheme of government devised for them should have had in view solely the maintenance of his authority. A little knot of his dependants had administered the affairs of each town virtually as his agents, and had kept up the continuity of that administration by being self-elected. But changes had crept in; the influence of the burghs increased, that of the landed proprietors had decayed. Charters had been lost, and the burgh government was

carried on according to a system that had often little basis beyond usage and tradition. As the eighteenth century advanced, these abuses had become more and more marked. A knot of petty tradesmen, without intelligence or public spirit, administered the affairs of the town chiefly or solely for their own interest. The rating was casual and of doubtful legality; the accounts were unaudited. The town property, which, scanty at first, had, in course of time, grown in many cases into a valuable asset, was squandered and dissipated by a system of scarcely disguised plunder, upon which the sole check was the mutual suspicion and jealousy of the little band of pilferers. Leases of town property were granted on nominal considerations. Improvements were utterly neglected. The prisons, the poorhouses, the useless townguard, the cleansing of the streets—all were regarded as but instruments for petty peculation. And the evil did not end with the town itself. Groups of these burghs sent fifteen members to Parliament, and the election was entirely in the hands of the delegates. That votes were to be secured by barefaced bribery was a thing of common notoriety. At times a scandal of corruption became too flagrant to be tolerated in absolute silence, and occasionally there was an investigation before a court of law. But it was hard to bring home the guilt, and harder still to affix to it any penalty; and the rare cases when such investigations took place left the offenders scot free.

But now the townsmen were advancing in independence and in intelligence. The burghs felt their own importance, and were determined to secure regularity in their administration. The little knots of corruption that absorbed all municipal power must be broken up,

and rising taxation compelled attention to securing what remained of the town property. There were murmurings on every side. Forty-nine burghs joined in petitioning Parliament for redress. The Convention of Delegates from the burghs met annually in conclave at Edinburgh, and swore not to desist from the task of cleansing this Augean stable until it was accomplished. Many indeed, knowing how hard that task would be, were hopeless of success. "Reform the burghs!" said one who was asked to help the cause of reform; "you might as well try to reform hell." But at first the great majority of better opinion in Scotland was ready to join in stamping out the abuse and letting light in upon these obscure nests of corruption. The burgesses of Dumbarton in 1787 brought an action against their magistrates to enforce an audit of the burgh accounts. Public sympathy was entirely on their side. That maladministration existed was too evident for doubt. But every legal quibble was brought to bear to prevent investigation. When the case was tried before the Court of Exchequer, the judges were compelled to decide for the magistrates, but they did so in a manner rarely heard in a court of justice, openly avowing that they gave the decision against their feelings and their sympathies, and urging the defeated side not to cease their agitation until they had compelled the Legislature to listen to their demand for a just reform.

It seemed as though a few years only would pass before this long-standing abuse should cease to exist. Dundas was not unwilling to listen to reform: Pitt was only too ready to help it forward But in an evil day for Scotland this sound measure of reform became a tool in the hands of faction. A scent of what was approaching seemed already in the air; the one side

was attracted by anything that seemed to savour of revolution, the other seemed equally to dread the redress of abuses lest it might proceed too far. The delegates from the burghs sought support in London, and they found it willingly accorded to them by an Opposition that sought for any topic which might bring them credit and might associate the Government with the defence of wrong-doing. Here they found good material ready to their hands, and Sheridan and Fox quickly developed an amazing interest in the wrongs of petty burghs which were to them no more than names. The subject was too useful to be parted with expeditiously, and so session after session a motion was brought up or leave asked to bring in a Bill for Scottish burgh reform when only a few weeks remained before prorogation. The tactics of the Opposition were plain enough, and, with some lack of foresight, Dundas played into their hands by trying a hopeless defence of abuses which could not be denied. "If Scotland was bad, England was no better. There were means by which an audit might be forced by legal process upon sufficient evidence of its necessity; rights could not be rashly abridged without compensation and without evidence that they had been abused." Parliamentary reform was already receding into the dim distance under the impending shadow of the French Revolution, and burgh reform could not be accomplished without touching on that problem, which every day was making more difficult. At length the topic became one of which the Opposition stood forth as the sole champion, and in regard to which Government assumed a position of determined resistance, and the hopes of reform for that generation were absolutely dispelled. It must be admitted that some of the means by which it was

pressed added little to its weight. One of the judges of the Court of Session, Lord Gardenstone, a man of sprightly wit and erratic activity, who showed energy in all subjects but that of his profession, and affected a somewhat ostentatious neglect of his judicial duties—a man, further, whose character won him scant respect, and whose avowed contempt for religion shocked even a tolerant age—made himself the marked champion of reform. He subscribed to the expense of the agitation, and was one of the most zealous speakers at the Convention. His ardent advocacy seemed to gather new strength from a visit to France, where he cultivated the society of those whose ideas gave the note to the first movements of the Revolution. One of his chosen intimates at home was a man who, at a later day, was transported for sedition. A century ago there prevailed no such strict ideas of judicial decorum as those to which we are accustomed; but even in that age such conduct on the part of a judge could hardly advance the cause of which he made himself so marked a partisan. It was the misfortune of Scotland that burgh reform became tainted in the thoughts of men with the suspicion of revolutionary aims, and the opportunity which at one time seemed to offer was lost in the gloomy struggle into which the nation was soon to plunge. A few years before the abuses might have been swept away with the consent of all that was best in the nation, and this might have brought in its wake a sound measure of Parliamentary reform. As it was, it struck the first note in the bitter contest which was to divide Scotland into two bitterly hostile camps.

Side by side with this it is almost amusing to watch another episode which provoked the susceptibilities of Scotland, and which encountered an unthinking and

unreasoning opposition. The rude breath of economic reform actually threatened the Court of Session, and proposed to cut down the judges below the mystic number of fifteen. With all its cumbrousness of method, and all its quaint attachment to the relics of antiquarianism, the Court of Session was, as a whole, an institution of which Scotland might be justly proud. It was secured by the Act of Union; and although a reform of method and a reduction of numbers were not matters which could be deemed outside the range of reasonable speculation, the suggestion was enough to provoke a good deal of national feeling. Fortunately for Scotland, she had a doughty, albeit a self-constituted champion. In a letter burning with all the heroic ardour of patriotism, James Boswell generously threw himself into the breach. "My friends and countrymen," he wrote from London in 1785, "be not afraid. I am upon the spot. I am on the watch." But lest this puissant championship might fail, he exhorts his fellow-citizens to resist to the death such a trampling on their national privileges as would be implied in any diminution of the solemn tradition that found the chief ward of unspotted justice in the fifteen judges who could occasionally meet in solemn conclave, and whose somewhat homely discussions alternately awed and amused the listening crowd. The threatened danger passed, and another institution was safe for a few more years from the desecrating hand of reform.

It was not likely, when the ranks were closing for a long struggle, and when any hints at change were received with more and more of suspicion and misgiving, that any attempt at reviving the old theme of restoring free election in place of patronage in the Church should receive much consideration.

Once more, in 1785, we find the matter mooted in the Assembly; and strangely enough an overture "to consult the landed interest" on the subject was strongly supported by Henry Erskine, and others of the nascent party who were to match themselves with the adherents of the Government. Perhaps it was hoped that the selfish jealousy with which the landed interest regarded the claims of the Church to an increase of stipends, had made a breach between them and the Moderate party which might cause the landed interest, if consulted, to pronounce against patronage. If so, the hope was disappointed. The landed proprietors might be jealous of the Church, but they were too sensible of their own interest to break with her. The motion was lost by 100 votes to 64.

The opposing parties were coming more and more clearly to recognise the line of demarcation between them which every day was marking with more vivid clearness. The storms abroad were casting their shadows upon Scotland; and the violence of the faction fights at Westminster were reflected in the increased virulence of political disputes at home.

It is curious to notice the different effects that these disputes had in Scotland. There was one which for a time agitated London to a high pitch of excitement. The charges against Warren Hastings were precisely of the sort to stir an easy and indiscriminating benevolence—hardly to be distinguished from selfish folly—to a fury of pious indignation against supposed oppression. All the resources of eloquence, restrained by no sense of responsibility, nursed that indignation till it fancied itself the purest of virtues, and forgot that it was serving the purposes of faction and of captious criticism of a great career.

All that indignation was presently to fade away into a pale and ineffective oblivion until it was once more revived in a later day by the rhetorical outbursts of Macaulay, to be finally laid to rest by the judicial and unimpassioned criticism of Sir James Stephen. But for the moment the turn of fashion, and the impulse of the crowd, was to applaud the attacks upon a distinguished public servant, and to apply to the obscure and intricate involution of Eastern affairs the ready judgment which served well enough—corrected by the sound common-sense of the average man—for the discussion of home affairs. From the very first there was something of unreal and simulated display in the whole process. The trial was conducted with all the pomp and dignity that made of it a fashionable excitement. Its danger to national interests were forgotten, and the very picturesqueness of the scenes about which its incidents were grouped gave it additional *éclat*. For once the bitterness of faction found on its side many whose motives were above question. Whether Pitt was wise in yielding to the storm, whether he might not have maintained a more dignified course in resisting a prosecution which was perilously near to persecution, may perhaps be doubted; but there can be no doubt that both he and Dundas were honest in their belief that some of the charges against Warren Hastings were true. Their private correspondence proves so much, but it does not prove more. It does not prove that the admission of guilt on the part of those to whom Hastings was justified in looking as his champions was not prompted—it may be unwittingly—by political exigency. A stern refusal of all compromise with rash and exaggerated denunciations would, to our mind,

have reflected greater honour upon Pitt in the eyes of posterity. A readily admitted conviction as to the guilt of a great public servant, on the part of the minister to whose chivalry he trusted, is apt to be suspicious when it coincides with the exigencies of party warfare. Undoubtedly Pitt might have been overborne by the swelling tide of popular indignation had he stubbornly refused to admit that amidst exaggeration there was a residuum of truth; and the caution that made him concede something to the foe was only too natural. Pitt's own conscience did not tell him that he was unfairly deserting one whom he was bound to defend; when he admitted part of the case against Hastings, it was unquestionably on the ground that he had persuaded himself that the part admitted was true. None the less, the injury which he inflicted on the great governor was more deadly than the most eloquent denunciations of his sworn foes.

In England this blunted the edge of the Opposition's attack; but it was not so in Scotland. India had become the coveted resort of numbers of Scotsmen, to whose energy and talents much of the laborious construction of our Eastern Empire was due. Rough and ready methods, the expedients that must occur to the mind of the beleaguered general, were not judged there under the exciting stimulus of rhetoricians, or according to the complacent theories of armchair politicians. On the whole, Scottish opinion was in favour of Hastings; and Pitt's desertion of his cause, though it did not lose him Scotland's support, was none the less a strain upon her fidelity. His attitude of half-hearted defence and of trafficking with a virulent prosecution was too subtle to be under-

stood, and too indefinite to be admired by a generous people.

But if Pitt failed to carry with him the entire sympathies of Scotland in his conduct in regard to Hastings' impeachment, there was another struggle which he had to maintain in which he had her cordial support. In 1788 the first cloud of insanity fell upon the king. There was much probability that the cloud would soon lift, and that the king would once more assume the government. But the moment was seized by the Opposition, who had gained the Prince of Wales for their faction, to assert his rights to an unlimited Regency, which would virtually have abrogated for ever the rule of George III., would have overturned the existing Ministry, and would have delivered the nation and the Crown into the hands of those who had already proved themselves to be an unprincipled faction. The crisis was one of vast importance, and on Pitt's part it called for a courage that could brave almost certain disaster, in the hope that some happy chance might give an issue from a hopeless *impasse.* To almost all his adherents, it seemed as if Pitt's Government was doomed, and as if he had made an implacable enemy of the Prince, into whose hands power was soon to pass, and who had acquired an unsound and superficial, but prevailing, popularity. The crisis was averted only by the sudden restoration of the king in the spring of 1789, while the Constitutional question of the Regency was under hot discussion. What our destinies in the immediate future would have been, had the fates decreed otherwise, it is hard to say. The nation must then have met overwhelming danger, with only a motley and discredited crew to guide her course.

Here, at least, Pitt had no half-hearted support from Scotland. By a strange revulsion of feeling, that nation which had longest maintained the struggle against the family of George III. was now the staunchest in its loyal attachment to his person. Conviviality was always in excess in the Scotland of that day; but it never launched into such boisterous and uproarious excess as when it celebrated the birthday of the king. Scotland knew little and cared less for all the tittle-tattle about the king's friends; for all the high-sounding theories that professed to mingle respect for the Crown with reiterated denunciations of its action. It associated the attacks upon George III. with the virulent abuse of Scotsmen that had been rampant in the days of Lord Bute. It knew the antics of Wilkes and the Patriots only by distant hearsay. It had never understood the political faith of those who had extolled the American rebels in order to injure the ministers of the Crown, and had rejoiced in the successes of these rebels, which their own factious bitterness had done so much to assist.

But scarcely had this episode passed before the first threatenings of a greater storm were heard, and Pitt had to face the heaviest task of his life. The signs of anarchy and revolution became rife in France in 1789; and to the vast majority of the British people the Crown appeared, above all the contentions of faction, as the chief security against the contagion of such an example. If anything had been wanting to confirm the hold of Pitt and Dundas upon the Scottish nation, it was supplied by their steadfast defence of the afflicted king when all the odds in the fight seemed against them, and when they were defending a dismally forlorn hope.

During the next generation we have to follow an entirely new phase of Scottish history. We have to see how Scotland became divided into two hostile camps, whose antagonism became the more intensely bitter as the arena of their strife was small. On such a stage, faction is certain to follow personal lines, and to become the source of keen personal animosity. The strife of party was bitter enough in England. There it was an inherited tradition; it had its source in wide divergences of opinion; it had been inflamed by at least half a century of Parliamentary struggle, which during the reign of George III. had assumed a virulence which was almost without example. But within a few years the intensity of party feeling in Scotland, of a type hitherto scarcely known, became even keener than anything which England could show. And the remarkable peculiarity of this development was, that it took its rise in divergences which were superficial and unreal, and in which no considerable amount of national feeling was involved; that it left the larger part of the nation absolutely untouched; that it was fostered and fomented with assiduous care altogether out of proportion to its importance; and that those who came under its influence looked back upon it with feelings absurdly exaggerated, and mistook for the work of a party struggle changes which were really the effect of a far-reaching social transformation, with which Whig and Tory had equally little to do.

During the eighteenth century Scotland had indeed found ample occasion for strong outbursts of national feeling, and had been divided into opposite parties, resting upon fundamental differences. The question of Union with England; the Jacobite rebellions; the divergences upon ecclesiastical government—each of

these had stirred the whole nation, and might at any moment have given rise to civil war. Some minor questions had given rise to considerable feeling—such as the hereditary jurisdiction, the refusal of a Scottish militia, and the incidence of taxation. But all these had followed lines quite distinct from those of English parties. For a hundred years, the dominant tone of all Scottish politicians who were not avowed Jacobites—and the latter had dwindled by this time into little more than the memory and the shadow of a party—had been that of Revolution Whigs. The distinctions of the House of Commons had found no counterpart in Scotland. The name of Patriot, as a synonym for the most virulent of factious partisans, was unknown within her borders. Amongst Scottish representatives at Westminster there were some who were adherents of the Administration, others who were in the Opposition interest; but their attitude was determined by personal considerations, and had little to do with fundamental political differences.

At the beginning of Pitt's Administration, Scottish society was undergoing a great change. A few of the old type remained, imbued with the notions of an older generation, repeating its manners, and remaining as picturesque monuments of an older society. So far as outward forms and usages went, there was no anxiety to discard them. But, in reality, a new state of things already prevailed. The great landlords had lost their vast personal following, and in place of it were fain to be content with the increasing rent-roll which the advancing prosperity of the country brought them. The towns were growing rapidly in importance, and the development of manufactures was bringing a new element into play. Scotsmen were less and less confined

within their own borders, and were losing something of the exclusiveness of national feeling. All were conscious of anomalies which existed in her Parliamentary representation, in her system of burgh administration, and in her total want of all local government. The evils of the absurdly strained system of entails were fully recognised, and it had already undergone some modification. In 1784, it might have been expected that wide and far-reaching changes would soon be brought about in Scotland, without exciting any violent storm of party warfare. Meetings in favour of Parliamentary reform were attended by men of influence, who belonged exclusively to no one party: the cause of burgh reform had, as we have seen, received decided support from the judges on the bench. Any violent division between Whig and Tory was unknown.

And even when the various movements which preceded the French Revolution began to stir men's thoughts and excite their passions in England, they aroused no strong feeling in Scotland. It would be vain to look there for any such dreams of new political and social ideals as caught hold of the minds and fancies of some of the strongest intellects in England. Even in England, the influence proved evanescent, and before many years were past, the orgies of the French Revolution had dispelled the illusions of those who had imagined that a new dawn of hope for humanity was near. But in Scotland no man of wide influence or commanding intellect was carried away by the new enthusiasm. Those who were supposed to represent the revolutionary tendency were men of little power, leaders only amongst weaklings, borrowing their ideas and their words from English writers, and more fit to

serve as objects of pity than of anger. Those who, sheltered behind constitutional forms, endeavoured to use popular discontent as an instrument of party, were men without any serious following, and were unfit, either by mental endowment or by character, to be the leaders of any important movement. At a later day, and on a distant view, they might be elevated into heroes, and a political party of a very different complexion might indulge in the fancy that a great national movement, of which that party was the heir, was then inaugurated. But as a fact, the so-called revolutionary party in Scotland was based upon no impulse of intellectual force, was encouraged by no Scotsman of weight or character, and had absolutely no influence but a negative one—that of checking a tendency towards moderate reform, and postponing it for more than a generation.

The first steps taken by that party were timid and tentative. There existed a society to commemorate the revolution of 1688; and its name was found convenient as a cover for the new designs. It showed some new energy in celebrating the memory of William III. and the glories of our own Revolution; but its members hardly concealed the fact that the ideas which they professed bore a closer resemblance to those which were in active operation in France than to those which animated the Convention Parliament of 1688. Stories were repeated of gatherings where the achievements of the French National Assembly were toasted, and where the name of Tom Paine was received with applause; where Liberty and Equality and the Rights of Man were vaunted as the weapons by which the existing state of society was to be overthrown. Meanwhile the picture of the ghastly freaks of epidemic madness in Paris,

with all its crudities and its barbarities, was stirring men's feelings to their depths, and it was little wonder that the vapourings of the association of the Friends of the People, which now began to hold its meetings in various Scottish towns, should arouse at once alarm and indignation. All that was strongest in the nation was driven into a mood which, not unnaturally, became one of intolerant reaction. Jacobitism had died out, but the sympathies it embodied infused themselves into the party that now stood forward as the bulwark against an aggressive proletariat. Ideas of reform, which a few years before found support from both parties, were now banished from the political creed of men who saw nothing but danger and disaster in any tampering with revolution. The abuses of burgh administration could not now, it was thought, be touched without setting the match to an explosive mine. It may be well to record briefly the contemporary history of that question. In 1783 it had begun to occupy the close attention of the delegates of the burghs. In 1787 a definite scheme was formed. It did not seem impossible then to obtain the support of the Tory administration for this scheme ; but it was found that Pitt and Dundas refused to move. Recourse was then had to Fox and Sheridan, and under their auspices the question was mooted in Parliament, but met with determined opposition. Year after year the motion was renewed, but the Lord Advocate palliated the abuses, and resisted change. At length in 1792 he brought forward a weak and temporising measure which would have done so little that the Opposition rejected it, and it was quietly dropped. Next year found the alarm of innovation too strong to permit any hope of success for a scheme of reform, and almost

with the acquiescence of the Whigs it was left untouched for a few years more. Still more was this the case with the larger and more important question of Parliamentary reform. The anomalies of the franchise had a few years before been admitted by all. Now even the moderate Whigs avoided the subject, which was left in the hands of the societies which avowed more or less sympathy with the aspirations of the French Revolution. To the quiet nerves of retrospection this may seem unreasonable; but who can wonder that men, who were living under the appalling reports of the orgies of the French Convention, shrank with some horror from societies which avowed their complicity with the leaders of that Convention, which borrowed their catchwords from its reports, and which took for their political manual the ribaldries of Tom Paine, whose name figured amongst the foreign members of that assembly which now terrorised France, and was a menace to all Europe? The landed gentry, the clergy, the magistrates, the well-to-do tradesmen—all were at one in their detestation of political change when it was associated with revolution, when its aim seemed to be plunder, and when its plans seemed likely to be realised only by sweeping away all the landmarks of the constitution. To proclaim oneself an adherent of reform was now to assume a character of reckless political profligacy, and to mark oneself out as an enemy of society.

To a large extent, no doubt, this was the exaggerated alarm of a propertied and privileged class. Strong arguments could be adduced for the necessity of reforming many abuses in Scottish administration; but abstract arguments are apt not to be listened to when indignation has been kindled and patience

exhausted by the crimes of those who were held up as models for imitation, and whose chief passion, openly avowed, was virulent hatred of our country and her Government. Common sense was outraged, and patience was exhausted by the flimsy theories of men who preached a millennium, and found the evidence of its advent in the foul deeds now being enacted in the name of Liberty on the soil of France. It is true that the advocates of reform attempted to dissociate their schemes from revolutionary methods; but their sincerity was more than suspected when their methods were examined. The nation had been prepared for reform; but its attention was now arrested by what it saw abroad, and it stayed its hand and stood at gaze. The brotherhood of man had no charms for a shrewd and practical race, proud of its traditions, jealous of its nationality and keenly alive to the grades which distinguished class from class. The wiser heads in Scotland knew the charms which fanaticism had for a Scottish populace, and judged that such fanaticism might find sustenance in politics now, as it had in religion in the past. The dominant latitudinarianism, far from making Scottish society pervious to vague aspirations, made it all the more callous to popular enthusiasms. Dominant Toryism might, no doubt, become obstinate, bigoted, selfish, and domineering. But in its inception it was rather cynical, critical, and impatient of excess and folly. Its first movement was one of contempt; it was only as time went on that it became angry and virulent.

The agitation for reform was now identified chiefly with the association of the Friends of the People. Three topics had before been chiefly urged; the

reform of the Parliamentary franchise, the reform of burgh administration, and the institution of trial by jury in civil cases. The last of these was popular in appearance ; but it was quite permissible to doubt whether it had any necessary connection with constitutional liberty, or whether it would introduce any substantial improvement in the administration of the law. The arguments in favour of the first two were certainly strong, and the reform of the burghs seemed to threaten no constitutional danger. But the strength of the demand might fairly be doubted when it was found to be annually urged, not so much by Scottish members as by Fox and Sheridan, whose chief object was too evidently to find a telling subject for debate, and to embarrass the Government. In 1790 the Whig Club of Dundee passed an address to the National Assembly of France. It is true that the address contains absolutely nothing against our own constitution, and makes no attack either on the Crown or on the aristocracy. But the example was a catching one, and other addresses were more suspicious in their origin, and less guarded in their language. In Scotland as well as in England the alarm increased ; and in Scotland especially the advocates of reform sank in credit, while their complicity with more subversive schemes was more than suspected. The most prominent Parliamentary opponent of the Government from Scotland was the Earl of Lauderdale ; and neither by talents nor by character was he a man likely to impress his countrymen. Acrid, passionate, and crafty — with all the lower arts of a political intriguer, but none of the resource and persuasiveness that make an intriguer successful—

Lord Lauderdale is one of the least attractive figures in Scottish history during the forty years which follow. It was consistent with his character, that reform ceased to have charms for him when it ceased to be an engine of faction, and that he closed a long career of political restlessness by opposing, with all the scanty influence which he possessed, the accomplishment of that Parliamentary reform in times of peace which he had used as an instrument of faction in times of storm and danger.

It was not surprising that such a man, at a time like this, should be suspected of knowing more than he avowed of the less scrupulous tactics of those who urged reform. Before long these last brought themselves within the arm of the law. In May 1792 the meetings of the Friends of the People had become so frequent, and their tone had become so menacing, that a Royal Proclamation was issued against seditious writings and meetings. It was the subject of fierce Parliamentary debate, in which Pitt and Dundas had now the aid of Burke against the tirades of Sheridan and Fox. The Government carried the day, time after time, by overwhelming majorities in the Commons; and by an even greater preponderance of voices in the Lords, where the chief opponents were Lord Lansdowne—as little trusted now as when, under the name of Lord Shelburne, he had gained the reputation for shiftiness and trickery which marred his eminent talent—and Lauderdale, who outdid Lansdowne in the art of arousing suspicion, but was incomparably his inferior in statesmanship. The opponents of the Government outside Parliament became more desperate and more bold. On the king's birthday in June there were serious riots in Edinburgh, where an

angry crowd assembled to burn Henry Dundas in effigy, in revenge for his opposition to burgh reform, and when his house was attacked and the rioters dispersed only by the military. Another meeting of the Friends of the People was held at Edinburgh in the following month; but although this came within the terms of the Royal Proclamation, and although the Government were aware that methods more dangerous than those avowed were being pursued, no prosecutions were as yet instituted. Early in 1793 several persons were prosecuted for illegal meetings and for drinking seditious toasts; and two booksellers, named Stewart and Elder, were indicted for publishing the "Rights of Man." Much eloquence may no doubt be spent, and specious arguments may be adduced, in denunciation of such an invasion of the liberty of the press and of free debate. But with the tocsin sounding in Paris; in a society alarmed and indignant; and under the pressure of a war which avowedly proclaimed for its ulterior object the destruction of the English constitution, the Government would have either risen to a surprising height of abstract philosophical argument, or sunk to a surprising depth of political weakness, had it failed to act firmly towards those who made themselves instruments in disseminating the vulgar and seditious garbage of Tom Paine. In none of these cases, however, was any punishment more severe than a few months' imprisonment inflicted.

By this time, however, the opposing ranks had closed, and in the heat of the conflict calm and constitutional methods were scarcely to be expected. It can hardly be said that at this juncture the action of

the judicial body in Scotland was guided by wise counsels, or by strict impartiality.

It may be well to consider how that judicial body was now formed, and what were its chief characteristics at this time. In many of its usages, and in its methods of applying the law, the Court of Justiciary was a relic of the past. That it had been little altered hitherto, and that in spite of faulty and narrow principles it had nevertheless earned the high respect and confidence of the country, was due mainly to a series of judges of remarkable ability, who had been trained in a school that inured them to state-craft and to public life. The nominal head of the Court was the Lord Justice-General, who was usually a nobleman of commanding position and influence. But under him the administration of the Criminal Law, and in a great measure the maintenance of public order, and the direction of the executive, had long been in the hands of the Lord President and the Lord Justice-Clerk. The holders of these offices were generally men who had previously had a long training in public life, and came to power with an experience wider than that of the mere lawyers. Throughout the century—in Duncan Forbes of Culloden; in more than one generation of the Dundas family; in men like Fletcher; and in one like Lord Auchinleck, the rugged but forcible parent of James Boswell—these offices had occupants fully equal to their responsibilities. In the abstract, it may seem expedient that the judicial element should be entirely separate from the executive, and in times of settlement this is doubtless the case. But under an administration such as that of Scotland during the greater part of last century, the wider experience and larger outlook which the

judicial Bench thus acquired, was of distinct and indisputable value.

But this political enlargement of the judicial functions had now almost disappeared. For at least a generation there had been no rebellion calling for prompt and yet skilful action in sudden emergencies. The executive government in Scotland had become largely a matter of routine; and such as it was, it had been gradually assumed into the hands of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Of the judges now on the Bench few had even sat in Parliament; none had gained experience in practical administration; and they lacked the knowledge of affairs which is above all things important for a judge at times of political excitement, and which more than compensates for the danger that former attachment to a political party may give undue bias.

At this time the office of Lord President had recently been assumed by Sir Ilay Campbell of Succoth —a man highly respected, an astute and careful lawyer, but with no experience of political life, and no claim to commanding ability or vigour of personal character. The Lord Justice-Clerk was Robert Macqueen (Lord Braxfield), a man who, unlike the majority of the Scottish judges, was of comparatively humble birth, and had not, in climbing the ladder of professional success, divested himself of the coarse homeliness of his original station. He was a man whose experience was bounded by the Parliament House; but his powerful intellect and masterful character made his personality all the stronger and more forcible because a contracted sphere and narrrow experience had concentrated its powers and left him without the useful, if sometimes debilitating, lessons of

compromise which are learned from contact with a variety of men. In all the political trials which now ensue, Lord Braxfield undoubtedly is the leading figure on the Bench: coarse, domineering, sarcastic, but yet with an intellect ever on the alert, instinct with a rough and ready common-sense and humour, and keen to detect any weak point in the argument for the defence; withal regardless, even to consummate contempt, of popular opinion. His habitual carelessness of demeanour and freedom of language made him give utterance to gibes and sarcasms sometimes on the Bench, and sometimes in the privacy of social intercourse, which were repeated and perhaps exaggerated, and which were far from adding to the dignity of the judicial office, or to its reputation for impartiality.

Nor were there amongst his colleagues any who could counteract or temper his vigorous personality. Amongst them was Lord Gardenstone—already noted—whose character was too flimsy, and whose attention to his professional duties was too slight to give him any real weight. Another was David Rae, Lord Eskgrove, a man of much acuteness, and an able lawyer of an antique and narrow type, but whose oddities both of intellect and of demeanour moderated the respect which he might otherwise have obtained. Lord Hailes was a cultivated and learned man, whose thoughts were perhaps more occupied with antiquarian investigations than with the maintenance of a judicial sway; while Lord Monboddo was known rather for his quaint eccentricities and social humour than for any consummate mastery of the law.

Early in 1793 a somewhat odd illustration of the lack of prudence on the part of the Bench was given.

A scene, doubtless carefully rehearsed, and more edifying than strictly constitutional, was enacted between the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and the Judges. The worthy Provost appeared, attended by the appurtenances of civic dignity, and delivered an address to the Judges on the excellence of the constitution, and the wickedness of those who found any fault or blemish in it; and this address was answered by a long homily from the Lord President, in which the wickedness of innovation and the dangers of sedition were duly urged for the benefit of the lieges. This homily was entered on the records of the Court. It was probably not the means best calculated to impress a suspicious public with the strict partiality of the judicial Bench.

In August 1793 took place the first of the trials for sedition which attained much notoriety, and which afterwards became favourite, and, it must be admitted, favourable, topics of declamation amongst those who were in search for instances of Tory tyranny and of the persecutions endured by the pioneers of the later Whig party. It was that of Thomas Muir for sedition. He was a young man under thirty years of age, the son of a well-to-do commercial man in Glasgow, who had purchased a landed estate known as Huntershill. Young Muir was a man of more than average ability, of ardent temperament, and overstrained ambition, who, after a good education, had passed as an advocate, and employed the abundant leisure which the early years of that career offered, in political discussion, and in ventilating, at the meetings of the Friends of the People, views which were not perhaps very advanced, but which in the existing state of public opinion were inopportune.

There is no evidence to prove that his aims were other than sincere and his motives honest; and in the abstract it was difficult to condemn an agitation for Parliamentary Reform, of which Pitt and other members of the Cabinet had, only a short time previously, been ardent advocates. The French Revolution had inspired new hope in those who still pursued these aims; but the very fact that they received new impulse from the events in France was the very reason why, by another and a more numerous section, they should now appear dangerous and revolutionary. Muir had attended such meetings and taken a leading part in their discussions. The Scottish branch of the association had first met at Glasgow in October 1792, and Muir was elected its vice-president. He had been in constant communication with the most strenuous advocates of drastic political change, and—a circumstance which told heavily against him—he had been associated with Irish political societies from which real danger was to be expected. At a meeting of delegates at Edinburgh, in December 1792, he brought forward a strongly worded address from the Society of United Irishmen, and endeavoured to persuade the delegates to reply in the same tone. In common, probably, with all those who watched with interest the struggle between Burke, who was now denouncing revolution, and Tom Paine, who was its English protagonist, he had discussed the pamphlets of the latter, had even been the means of disseminating them, and had recommended some of the writings of the French revolutionary authors. In his own words, as repeated at his trial, there was nothing very extreme or dangerous, and although he had freely discussed the most advanced political theories, there

was ample evidence that he had expressed doubt as to their applicability to British politics, and had counselled moderation. But, on the other hand, he had made himself obnoxious to those whose nerves were not unreasonably shaken by the events now going on in Paris, he had encouraged meetings of societies which were discountenanced by Government, and he was received with cordial friendship in Paris by some of those who were the chief actors on the French scene. It was suspected—as it afterwards appeared, not without reason—that some of those who discussed the necessity of political reform, were prepared to take practical and violent steps to enforce it upon an unwilling Government. Doubt, suspicion, and irritation were almost necessary elements in a society which viewed with bitter hatred and serious alarm the contagion of the French example which had already aroused the indignant protest of Burke, and were giving rise to increasing dread on the part of Pitt. Indignation and fear found new ground when the French republic declared war against England in the opening days of 1793. It was no wonder that the tide of feeling ran fiercely against a small and insignificant section, which at such a time were pleading not merely for some measure of Parliamentary reform, and for the amendment of its more glaring anomalies, but who found the moment well chosen for urging universal suffrage and annual Parliaments. But it is none the less to be regretted that the Courts of Law allowed themselves to be swayed by panic and by prejudice.

The prosecution of Muir and others was resolved upon by the Government, and it can scarcely be said that they could have satisfied public opinion in Scotland had they refrained from it. Nor can much be

said against the conduct of the prosecution by the Lord Advocate, Robert Dundas of Arniston, son of the Lord President and nephew of Henry Dundas, the Home Secretary. The prosecutor could scarcely do otherwise than urge as strongly as he could the points that told against the accused. It was for the Bench to hold the balance; and this is just what, unfortunately, the Bench did not do. The Lord Justice-Clerk Braxfield made himself more than prosecutor: he strained every point against the prisoner with a vindictive spite which not justice alone, but statesmanship, would have forbidden. Muir had committed a grave error in breaking the bail which had been granted after his first arrest in January 1793, and not appearing to take his trial in February. As a consequence he was outlawed, and eventually appeared to take his trial in August very seriously compromised. But he had in no way concealed his movements, nor attempted to evade his final arrest. His presence in Ireland, in London, and in Paris was perfectly well known. His motive in visiting Paris was one which perhaps involved undue intimacy with the revolutionary leaders and their designs, and certainly assumed to himself too much of a representative character; but he no doubt honestly desired to prevent, so far as he could, the execution of Louis XVI., which he and others who sympathised with the Revolution deemed likely to injure the cause. He might have kept himself out of the clutches of British law-courts; but he voluntarily returned to Scotland, and surrendered himself to justice there. He doubtless thought that political discussion could scarcely be held to be treasonable; but he mistook the temper of the nation, and certainly did not fore-

see that such temper would be reflected and exaggerated on the judicial Bench. Braxfield answered his appeals to the examples of notable members of the Government who had advocated reform by reminding him, with all the insolence of sarcastic humour, that these personages were not within the jurisdiction of the Scottish Courts. So far from admitting that discussion was lawful, he declaimed against any proposal that would have given representation to other interests than those of the landed gentry. He strained against the defendant the delay which had unavoidably occurred in meeting his trial. He imputed it as an additional wrong that the populace had shown sympathy by applauding the prisoner in court. He declined to admit any flaw in the existing administration, and assumed that any criticism of it was in itself a wrong. With all the force of a strong but narrow intellect, and of a character that scorned any trafficking with opinions which he honestly believed to be wrong and dangerous, he refrained even from giving that appearance of decency which, with equal danger to the prisoner, he might have adopted, by concealing his own violent prejudice, and his complete sympathy with the indignation and alarm of those who deemed that the excesses of the French Revolution might ere long be enacted at home. It is impossible to bring against Braxfield any taint of corruption, or any desire to conciliate the Government, whose position indeed his outspoken prejudice gravely compromised. He was no time-server, and had no personal aim to attain. But his virulence was none the less indecent that it was thoroughly honest.

But otherwise the trial was little but a travesty of justice. The jurors were all selected from a consti-

tutional society which met at Goldsmith's Hall, out of whose lists Muir's name had been struck, and which might therefore be held to have prejudiced his case; and his challenges were summarily repelled, on the ground that, if allowed, they would infer the rejection as a juror of every loyal citizen. None of the usual indulgences granted to a prisoner conducting his own case were allowed him; but he and his witnesses were bullied and browbeat. In the result Muir was convicted not merely of "leasing"—an ancient and well-known Scottish legal term borrowed from the French *lèse-majesté*—but of the more serious charge, unknown either to custom or to statute law, but held to be valid at common law, of "sedition." For "leasing" the ordinary punishment would have been banishment. But sedition, it was held, left to the judges an "arbitrary" punishment. To have inflicted a sentence of banishment only upon Muir and his associates would merely have sent him to propagate his opinions in England, or somewhere beyond the Scottish border. More than this seemed necessary, and he was therefore sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. Like others similarly sentenced, he was sent to Botany Bay. There he purchased some land and remained for two or three years; but he was rescued by a foreign ship, and after some adventures by sea, in which he was severely wounded, he landed in France, and was conducted in triumph to the capital. But the wound was found to be incurable, and after a few months' residence on French soil, where his presence was welcomed as a sign of defiance to the English, he died in 1798.[1]

[1] His health had probably been seriously injured before the wound, by the horrors which, it was well known, attended a sentence of transportation. Gerald and Skirving (see *post*), on whom similar sentences were passed, survived their landing at Botany Bay only by three months.

Muir's trial took place in August 1793. In the next month it was followed by that of Thomas Fyshe Palmer, an Englishman of good family, educated at Eton and Cambridge, who had formerly been in orders in the Church of England, but was now a Unitarian minister at Dundee. The charges against Palmer were even more flimsy than those against Muir, and the proof of his having used any inflammatory language was if anything less conclusive. He was accused of having printed an "Address to their fellow-citizens" from a "Society of the Friends of Liberty," but although he was apparently the agent by whom it passed into the printer's hand, he was certainly not the author, and seems to have discountenanced its issue. He also was condemned to transportation for twelve years.

Meanwhile the alarm grew, and however a minority might protest against the miscarriage of justice, their remonstrances tended only to convince many that the danger was still more real, and that it could be met only by increased severity. In December of the same year the magistrates prohibited a meeting of British delegates at Edinburgh, and the widespread ramifications of the society, as well as the flagrant insult which they offered to public opinion in adopting the very phrases used in the French National Convention, roused the indignation to fever pitch—all the more that the sympathy for the accused amongst the lower class became every day more evident. In October William Skirving, a friend of Palmer, who had been educated at Edinburgh University for the Nonconformist ministry, and subsequently became an agriculturist of some repute, had published an account of Palmer's trial which had represented it as a

martyrdom likely to lead to notable results. He was himself deeply involved as secretary in the arrangements for the Convention of Delegates, held at Edinburgh between October and December 1793, which was undoubtedly an infringement of the Royal Proclamation of May 1792, and which was summoned to protest against the proposed suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In January 1794 he was brought to trial, also for "sedition," a word which he professed not to understand, and to which he refused to plead. The populace showed their sympathy by taking the horses out of his carriage and drawing him in triumph to the court. The same month saw the trial of Maurice Margarot on the same charge, and it also was attended by riots in the streets. Those who feared the danger of advanced political opinions now saw their fears confirmed. They found the delegates using the suspicious names of "Citizen," of "Sections," of "Committees of Secrecy," and believed them to be backed by a well-arranged scheme for arousing the terrors of mob-law. In March of the same year another Englishman, Joseph Gerald of Marylebone, was found to be carrying on revolutionary machinations in Scotland; he too was brought to trial, and, like Skirving and Margarot, he was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. The conduct of the trials might be indecent, and the sentences passed might be unduly severe. But the Government could hardly have prevented drastic action on the part of an outraged society, had they not shown themselves prepared to guard against designs which seemed to threaten property and order, or had they yielded in fear of the anonymous threats of reprisals by the hand of the political assassin which constantly reached them. In

April 1794 the Tory youth of Edinburgh took the law, indeed, into their own hands. A handful of Irish students frequented one of the theatres, and irritated the audience by refusing to uncover when the National Anthem was sung. The magistrates had insufficient police control to prevent a serious riot. A band of the younger bloods of the constitutional party took possession of the theatre, and enforced the respect due to loyalty by the summary arguments of oaken clubs. The riot led to no worse result than a few broken heads, and it is chiefly memorable from the fact that a certain young advocate, whose future fame was to outlast all these disputes, of the name of Walter Scott, was not ashamed to be a leader in the fray, and not averse in future years to recount his adventures in defence of loyalty outraged by the Hibernian visitors.

There were a few more arrests for charges of sedition of the same kind as those already dealt with. But the Government seemed to think that enough had now been done, and were perhaps convinced that in the Court of Justiciary, they had put in motion an engine which was a little too drastic in its methods. The trials and sentences were matter of keen discussion in Parliament, and many of the Whig speakers inveighed in no measured terms against the iniquities of the processes, and the scandalous bias of the judges. Unfortunately, Parliament is the worst possible tribunal for pronouncing on legal administration, and the Opposition spent themselves in vain efforts against an impregnable stronghold. Fox and Sheridan were, indeed, eloquent in their denunciations. They refused to listen to what they deemed to be legal quibbles, or to pay "implicit obedience to the doctrines of professional

men." They quoted with indignation the *dicta* of Braxfield as to the proper limitation of representation to the landed interest, and the hint given by another judge that torture was the only suitable punishment for such a crime. They prayed God to help the people who had such judges. But, after all, even when aided by the rasping virulence of Lauderdale, they could scarcely be accepted as authorities upon Scottish law; and the feeble minorities which they were able to command rather encouraged than prevented further severities. So far as strict law was concerned, it is safe to assume that the unanimous opinion of Scottish lawyers at that day was right in pronouncing that its dictates were obeyed at once in the indictments and in the sentences. In any case, it was amply established by the highest authorities, that no appeal lay against the Justiciary Court of Scotland. There might be just as little doubt that flagrant bias had been shown, and that the judges had permitted considerations to operate which they had no right to entertain. But there was no possibility for submitting legal evidence of this; and although it might have been possible to rectify such perversion by the exercise of the royal prerogative, the Opposition took the most certain way of rendering this impossible by the misguided course which they pursued. No one could have rendered Braxfield's action more safe against adverse criticism in Scotland than did Fox and Sheridan and Lauderdale.

In May 1794 there came the Act suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and the analogous Scottish Act of 1701. Only an insignificant minority in Scotland even whispered a protest: by the great

majority of those who could make their influence felt it was welcomed as a defence against impending danger. In September of the same year came a new trial—that of Robert Watt and David Downie—for high treason. There was no longer a question only of dangerous meetings, of resolutions that were tainted with revolutionary bias, of the distribution of questionable writings, and of addresses that were suspected of meaning more than they said. This time there was evidence of actual armed conspiracy. Confederates had been sworn; signals for a rising had been arranged; arms and money had been collected. It is true that the preparations were paltry and insignificant. But to allege this as a ground for leaving them unnoticed and unpunished, is inept and irrelevant. Their guilt was not measured by their insignificance; and it is absurd to suppose that in the temper of the public mind in 1794, when the orgies of the Revolution were in full swing, and when the resources of our country were strained to the uttermost in maintaining a war which was avowedly proclaimed by the foe as a means of revolutionary propagandism—the discovery of concealed arms, and the exposure of murderous plans, should not have roused the indignant alarm of the governing class, and made stern action not a matter of choice, but of compulsion on the Government. Watt—a despicable and cowardly wretch, who had for a time enacted the part of a Government spy, but had at length found conspiracy a more hopeful game—was sentenced to death, and was hanged without a word of remonstrance from any one. Downie also was sentenced to death; but after repeated reprieves he was at length liberated, on con-

dition that he banished himself from the country. He transferred his activities to the soil of America. Even this amount of mercy was not approved by the Scottish supporters of the Government.

But now the question was not one merely between theoretical reformers, who more or less justified their own classification with revolutionists, and the party who saw in such reformers a danger to society. The pressure of the war was more and more severely felt. Taxes were increasing; harvests were scanty; prices were rising fast. Starvation stared many of the poorer classes of the towns in the face; and the advance of manufactures had made these classes much more numerous and more formidable than they had been a generation before. In England bread riots were frequent, and Birmingham was the scene of bloodshed in June 1795—not for the last time in her history. The contagion spread to Scotland, and the populace became more and more difficult to control. Inevitably men's minds turned again to ideas of reform, and the conviction was pressed upon them that repression was not a permanent panacea. Amongst the younger professional men there were many, who did not seek a crown of martyrdom by acts provoking to prosecution, but who were tired of the old ways, weary of the irksome domination of an older generation, disinclined to take with gratitude the scraps that were thrown to them, and not altogether disposed to think that these scraps corresponded with their own very adequate appreciation of their personal merits and qualifications. Such feelings are made up partly of political aspirations, partly, also, of personal ambitions; and in the reminiscences of the actors

this element of political aspiration is, perhaps not unnaturally, somewhat unduly exaggerated. None of these young men made common cause with Muir or Palmer, with Skirving or with Margarot. When the French Revolution was at the high tide of its fury, they certainly did not express any sympathy with it. They had no desire for overturning property, annihilating the professions, or confounding distinctions of classes. But the existing state of things was not promising either to their tastes or their ambitions. The permanent proscription of public meetings closed the door to the aspirations of youthful eloquence. The Parliamentary representation of Scotland was a field from which all but a few privileged persons were hopelessly excluded. The ladder of professional advancement was one which had to be climbed by slow and painful rungs, and by a process of dismal and repulsive drudgery. The growing monotony of type and characteristic amongst the prominent denizens of Parliament Close, made it less attractive; and we must not forget that the generation which had passed since George III. became king, and which had seen the old types pass away, and the Jacobite become only a memory and a tradition, had not by any means made Edinburgh a more exciting or attractive place of residence than it was in the third quarter of the century. Small wonder was it that a band of young men became restless and discontented, and were unwilling to repeat the maxims of their forebears, with implicit credulity. Small blame to them, if in looking back in later days they were apt to mistake the promptings of discontent and reasonable ambition for the unalloyed ardour of political zeal. In a political

retrospect, however, we are not, perhaps, bound to take them entirely at their own valuation, or to believe that the fire of pure political zeal, without any alloy of personal aims, was sufficient to keep their enthusiasm alive.

It was in December 1795 that a matter was first mooted which had much to do with the first formation of a distinct Whig party amongst the professional class in Edinburgh. That party did undoubtedly give shape and definiteness to a very marked phase of Scottish political thought, down to a period after the middle of the present century.

In 1795 two bills were proposed—one to put a stop more effectually to seditious meetings, the other for the safety of the king's person against such threatening attacks as had been made on him in the streets of London on the 29th of October of that year. These attacks had called forth a general outburst of loyalty; and it was feared that they were now to be made the occasion for a serious encroachment on the liberty of the subject. Protests were made by the attenuated Whig party in Scotland; and a public meeting was held in Somer's Tavern on the 28th of November, at which the Dean of Faculty, Henry Erskine, moved a series of resolutions which condemned measures "which strike at the very foundation of the constitution." By a strange error of judgment there was tagged on to these resolutions a clause condemning the French war; and a fatal connection was thus established in the creed of the Scottish Whigs between the defence of constitutional liberty and want of sympathy with the struggle of the country against a powerful and aggressive tyranny abroad. There was now no talk of prosecution and of penal measures; but it became clear to

the Tories that there was an organised body in the country, with a well-defined but obnoxious political creed, which must be met by all the resources of determined and unflinching party organisation.

The question now was, what action should be taken to mark the general opposition which that political creed excited? The leading name amongst those who attended the meeting, and thus gave their countenance to the supposed enemies of law and order, and the avowed sympathisers with our foreign enemies, was that of Henry Erskine. Personally he was a man of eminent gifts and of great popularity. His position at the Scottish Bar was supreme. He belonged to an ancient family, the lustre of whose name was increased by his own eloquence and acknowledged wit, and by the successes of his brother on the larger stage of the English Bar. For a brief period in 1783, when the supremacy of the Dundas family had been set aside under the Coalition Ministry of Fox and North, the only man who could fill the place of Lord Advocate was Erskine. No personal feeling would have operated against such a man. But he held, by election of the Advocates, the position of Dean of Faculty, which, although entirely honorary and unofficial, made him the head and representative of the Bar. It was quite certain that the opinions which he had expressed were not those of the vast majority of the men to whose suffrages he owed the post, and whose sympathies he thus belied. Apart from any question of the freedom of political opinion, it was only natural that the Bar should resent the position in which they were thus placed, and should refuse to allow even acknowledged eminence and supreme personal popularity to be grounds for their own misrepresentation. For ten years in succession he

had been elected as Dean. But in December 1795 a body of eight advocates, of leading position, gave him warning that his re-election would be opposed. Of the issue of the contest there could be no doubt, and Erskine had only himself to blame if the general voice of his professional brethren resolved to assert itself. That he should resent what could not but appear to be an attempt to fetter his freedom of action was only natural. That he should prefer that freedom of action to any recantation was not only natural, but inevitable, and to have done anything else would have been inconsistent with his position and his character. But none the less natural was the action of his opponents, who found themselves compelled to choose between their public duty and their personal friendship. The election came on in January 1796, and Robert Dundas, the Lord Advocate, was chosen Dean of Faculty in Erskine's stead by a majority of 123 to 38. The representative of the Ministry thus became, at the same time, contrary to the usual and of late years the uniform practice, the chosen representative of the Bar. Political difference has never since, most happily, been the deciding element in such a contest, but it would be rash to predict that it never again may. It is inevitable that political feeling may at times rise so high, and that political differences may strike so deeply at the roots of social order, or turn upon so vital a question of national danger, as to compel all loyal citizens to postpone every minor consideration to the dictates of their political consciences. Such a crisis undoubtedly existed in 1796. It is true that pressure was in some instances brought to bear, and that a few wavering votes (including those of some who in later years belonged to Erskine's party),

which might have been cast for Erskine, were influenced by powerful patrons; but the majority was far too great to permit a doubt that the election represented the preponderating feelings of the Faculty as a whole. Those feelings may have been exaggerated or mistaken. Whether they were so opens a much more extensive argument; but to urge that their assertion at such a time was due only to prejudice or intolerance, is to create a fictitious martyrdom, and virtually amounts to denying to the Faculty the free right of electing their own representative.

But however that may be, the circumstance unquestionably became the starting-point of a new political departure. Henceforward war was openly proclaimed. Definiteness and precision were given to the tenets of the Opposition; and from 1796 a Whig party was regularly organised in Scotland, and gradually acquired not only a distinct creed, but tactics and characteristics of its own.

During the next two or three years it made no way whatever against the solid phalanx of the Tory party. That party was now animated at once by patriotic ardour and by the fear of revolutionary change. Either the example of French revolutionary methods or the danger of French invasion would, separately, have been sufficient to give vigour to party feeling; when combined, as they now were, they were irresistible. It is true that the widespread volunteer ardour, which turned Edinburgh into something like a standing camp, and converted sober citizens into martial enthusiasts, was not confined to one party. To have stood aloof entirely might have been suspicious, and would certainly have involved social ostracism; and those, therefore, who hated the war, and judged re-

sistance to Napoleon to be a form of insanity, were harassed by drills, and had to don the uniform and practise the manual exercises with as much painful and irksome regularity as those who found their pleasure in all the panoply of war, and whose imaginations pictured its glories more vividly than its remote, but none the less real, possibilities of danger. There is something comic in the situation which made the universal fervour a means of inspiring hope and buoyancy in those who supported the war, and dragged along as unwilling victims those who thought the war a popular folly, and did not in their hearts desire for it any more triumphant ending than it would probably have had, in case of recourse to the aid of their puissant arms.

Meanwhile the Tory party, however alarming the prospect abroad, felt themselves triumphant at home, and the tone of the metropolis of Scotland was predominantly in their favour. For a few years from 1796 the Palace of Holyrood was occupied by the Royalist exiles from France, the Comte d'Artois and his family; and the presence of such guests was eminently likely to rivet in Edinburgh society the conviction of the wrongs they had suffered, which might easily have their counterpart at home. The general election of 1796 gave the Government a new mandate of authority from the nation. In 1797 the end of a long struggle was reached in the grant of a Militia Act for Scotland; and the fact that in a few districts there was riotous resistance to its enforcement, only proved the necessity for firmness in the maintenance of order. Armed bands gathered, and by threats and violence compelled a timid magistrature to suspend the levies. But the resistance was

short-lived, and a few comparatively unimportant trials effectually crushed it. The riots caused by the starvation price of grain and the poverty which was the necessary result of a costly war were of greater danger; but these too were local, and they rather gave adequate ground for severe measures than occasioned any serious alarm. In 1798 the Society of United Scotsmen, an offshoot of the Friends of the People, again made itself heard of, and in January of that year a certain George Mealmaker, who had appeared as a subordinate agent in the previous trials, was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years. In 1799 a combination of journeymen shoemakers, in order to raise wages, led to a conflict with the authorities; and the proceedings at the trial which ensued are curious as showing the very modest theories on the subject which the most ardent Whigs of that day ventured to profess. The Lord Advocate urged the wickedness of such combination, the wrong which it might inflict on manufacturers, and its serious danger to society. Henry Erskine defended the prisoners, but he did not attempt to combat the views of the prosecution. On the contrary he admitted the wickedness; abandoned altogether any assertion of a right on the part of the workmen; excused them only on the ground of their utter ignorance; and deprecated severity only on the ground of their entire repentance and sincere promise of amendment. We have travelled far since 1799!

Before we quit this period it is well to advert to a matter which shows the contrast between the financial conditions of England and Scotland. In 1797 national credit was in the sorest straits: the pressure of war and the consequent heavy taxation; the disturbance of

trade, and the frequency of bad harvests; as well as the alarm of invasion—all these had made the commercial atmosphere a stormy one. Bankruptcies were frequent, and it seemed as though public credit might be swept away by the hurricane then threatened. To avert this the Bank Restriction Act was passed, which suspended specie payments by the Bank of England. In England the authority of the Legislature had to be called in to preserve the equilibrium, by making the notes of the bank, which had a legislative monopoly, the only authorised currency. The crisis was equally acute in Scotland; but there no monopoly existed, and no such restrictive legislation was possible. In these circumstances the nation met the crisis by independent action. The banks—products of no system of legislative dry-nursing, but the spontaneous growth of national enterprise—boldly threw themselves upon the forbearance and good sense of the nation, and did so with signal success. With no legislative sanction—nay, without any legal authority whatever — they resolved by common consent to suspend money payments. So healthy had been the growth and spontaneous development of Scottish banking, that it was able, with the general acquiescence of the nation, to take a step which had been possible in England only under the ægis of the Legislature. No better proof could be furnished of the faculty of the nation to produce a system adapted to its own needs, and strong in the trust which it had inspired in the nation.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SCOTTISH SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

At this point it seems well to turn aside from tracing the growth of party bitterness in Scotland, and the formation of two opposing political camps, in order to glance at one special phase of Scottish life and thought during the eighteenth century, which culminated towards its close.

No account of Scotland in that century would be complete if it omitted an estimate of the work of the Scottish philosophical school, and the part it played in moulding the character of the nation. This is not the place to enter upon any detailed examination of the special tenets of each member of the school. For us the main point of interest in the history of the movement is its bearing upon the national life and character.

There are certain points which it is well to note as a preliminary to the examination. First of all, those who formed the school were all essentially Scottish in character and in sympathy. It may be said of one that he was not born in Scotland; of another that he spent a large part of his life in France; of a third that he had imbibed, as an *alumnus* of Oxford, something of the spirit of the English universities. Few, indeed, of the men of

leading in Scotland during the eighteenth century were without some tincture of cosmopolitanism, and hardly one circumscribed his experience or his literary friendships by her boundaries. But every one of them by descent, by education, and by warmest sympathy, was distinctively a Scotsman. In her all his interests were centred; within her territory all his strongest sympathies lay; and he looked upon her soil as that on which he would choose to end his days. Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the school as a whole, it was undoubtedly from first to last a product of Scottish genius and of Scottish character, and as such it takes its place as the most durable school of philosophical thought, connected by one consistent thread of opinion, which Great Britain has yet seen.

Next we may admit, without disparagement to the eminence of its exponents, that they were not, as a rule, men of striking ability or originality. There is at least one marked exception to this rule. But for the most part the leaders of the Scottish school were rather men of strong character, of unwearied perseverance, and of consistent aim, than men whose words have remained as a living force for all time. Almost all were men who influenced their own generation—or those who were young when they were in maturity—by the force of personal contact and of personal character. Their power in this direction remained a vivid tradition, and was not restricted in its results. But all the same, it is chiefly a tradition, and is not enforced by any vital effect which their written words have upon the thoughts, or any currency which they obtained in the mouths, of men of later generations.

Their function indeed may not unfitly be compared to that of the great actors of a past age. Their names

continue to be familiar to us. They worked with consummate skill upon the feelings of the audiences who felt the spell of personal contact. Their influence was preserved because they did much to mould the feelings of those audiences, and so affected powerfully the history of each succeeding generation. But, with one or two exceptions, this was the limit imposed upon them by the very nature of the function which they had to discharge.

Because the philosophy which they inculcated was mainly shaped by the exigencies of its employment as an instrument of education. The establishment of abstract principles was not with them a leading motive. They cared little for long or subtle arguments, and did not trouble themselves overmuch about the technical structure of their systems. They did not search for fine distinctions, nor did they perceive how casual divergencies in statements might involve serious principles, and might, if pursued to their logical conclusion, land them at diametrically opposite poles of thought. They sought rather for points of contact, and found such points of contact in their common aim of giving a practically efficacious training to their scholars without ranging themselves into hostile camps. The territory which they cultivated admitted of various kinds of tillage, each of which might yield its quota of sustenance to the common weal; the debatable land beyond they were content to consider as beyond their range.

The whole school, from first to last, was centred in the universities, and those who partook of its labours beyond the walls of the universities were exceptional, and scarcely repeated the main characteristics of the school. It was, indeed, the principal instrument by

which the Scottish universities recovered and extended their influence over the nation at large.

From their first establishment the principal part of the Scottish universities' curriculum had consisted of logic and the various branches of moral and mental philosophy. From these the other branches of education had developed, and they had all assumed the aspects of new growths grafted on the parent stem. Even the classical languages had been only of later introduction, when the grammar schools had been found insufficient to furnish the *alumni* who flocked to the universities, with the general acquaintance with these languages which was deemed necessary as a sound foundation on which a structure of mental science might be built.

But the political struggles of the seventeenth century had been a period of dire adversity for the universities. Their scholars had decreased; their revenues had decayed; the purposes for which they existed occupied but a secondary place in the attention of the nation. They had done their best—but not always successfully—to resist the encroachments of the Church Courts, which aspired to a universal domination; and although they had more than once protested against interference, they had been able only imperfectly to check it.

After the Revolution, the Regenting system, as it was called, by which the graduates, or those who corresponded to graduates, carried on the tuition of the younger members of the university, was still in force. Under that system all the subjects of the curriculum were taught by one or another Regent to a certain number of the *alumni;* but the instruction was carried on by means of prescribed compendiums, in which the

pupils were duly exercised, but from which no discursion was permitted. Under such a system no progress in any special science was possible, much less encouraged; and the only training which the students obtained was through the practice of dialectical argument on the subjects dealt with in these compendiums, which cultivated subtlety and dexterity in verbal fence, but provided no field for intellectual expansion, nor permitted any practical application of principles to the ever varying scenes of ordinary life.

A Commission in 1695 did its best to perpetuate this system, with the purpose, it may be, of checking any boldness of discursive speculation, and curbing any tendency to bring a practical influence to bear on the national life. It was assumed that the Regenting system was to be perpetual; and upon each university was imposed the task of preparing a compendium in the four principal subjects then admitted to the curriculum — Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, and Physics. Glasgow and Aberdeen apparently neglected the injunction; but Edinburgh and St. Andrews prepared compendiums of metaphysics and logic, which were destined to have but a short tenure of life.

The older system was, indeed, doomed to disappear. The Regenting system was neither suited to the new needs of the nation, nor was it fitted to stimulate any real intellectual life in the universities. In 1708 it had practically disappeared in Edinburgh; in 1727 in Glasgow; in 1747 in St. Andrews; and in 1754 in Aberdeen. In its place came the Professoriate, by which a special professor was appointed for each of the various subjects—though the range over which his teaching was expected to extend was still wide enough to be astonishing to modern ideas—and his academical

discourses were to take the place of the dreary prelections in prescribed compendiums which had formerly prevailed. Such a system contained in it the germ of a new life. All depended upon the professors chosen. Fortunately the public spirit, and the zeal for learning of the universities, was equal to the task; and the professors for the most part proved themselves able to rise to the level of the function now laid upon them. The instruction was now given by regular courses of formal lectures, in which the professor had a free range, and in which he became the leading and authorised representative of the branch of mental or moral science over which he was chosen to preside. It was his interest to attract and stimulate pupils, to extend the range of his science, and open up new fields of speculation, bringing his own personal influence to bear in the enforcement of his views. Such a change could not but be stimulating; and it is to the honour of the Scottish youth that they rose to the new level of the teaching, and met with ready zeal such enthusiasm as the professor brought to his subject. The old practice of academic disputation was abandoned, and in its place came the numerous societies established by the students themselves for inquiry and discussion, which became one of the distinctive features of Scottish universities, and to which we shall have further occasion to allude. No change could have worked more rapid effects. In place of the narrow academic disputation, which fostered only a subtle logomachy, the students were thrown back upon a world of their own, where they struck fire from the contact of their own vivid energies, and were prepared to respond with the warmth of enthusiasm to the personal earnestness of a professor whose tongue was

no longer tied to the dreary pages of a prescribed compendium, but who felt that he had a free and fruitful field before him which he might cultivate after his own fashion. Only a few years passed until the lofty eloquence of Berkeley touched a chord amongst the young Scottish students, which it missed amongst his own countrymen, and until the bishop found a pleasure in encouraging their interests in a system more lofty and inspiring than the materialism of Locke. The idealism of Berkeley caught hold of their imagination, altogether independent of its logical completeness and consistency.

The first Professor (in the modern sense of the word) of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow was Gerschom Carmichael, the commentator on Puffendorf, whose influence was good, but whose tenure of the professorship was too short to be productive of great results; and his place was filled, on the invitation of the Senate, by a former *alumnus* of the University, Francis Hutcheson. His tenure of the chair was the opening of a new phase of Scottish university life.

Hutcheson was a Scotsman by descent only, and not by birth. His grandfather had migrated from Ayrshire to the north of Ireland, and both he and his son had been ministers of the Dissenting Presbyterian body in the neighbourhood of Armagh, where the philosopher was born in 1694. It is observable that the epithet of "Dissenter" is applied to him even by his colleague and biographer Leechman, a clergyman of the Established Presbyterian Church in Scotland, although he can hardly have regarded his Presbyterian brethren across the channel with that bitterness which they excited in the minds of some members of the Irish Establishment. Francis Hutcheson seems to

have been noted, even in his earliest years, for the same sweetness of disposition, the same unselfishness, and the same keen intellectual activity that marked him throughout life. From an academy near his birthplace he passed to the University of Glasgow, where he spent the years from 1710 to 1716. On his return to Ireland he was licensed as a Presbyterian preacher, and was induced to come to Dublin and open a private school there, under very notable patronage. Viscount Molesworth, the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Carteret, and Archbishop King were amongst his friends; and it was by the direct intervention of the archbishop that proceedings against him for having violated the Test Act, by opening his private school as a Dissenter, were stayed. He subsequently had the countenance of Walpole's arch-emissary, the Primate Boulter; but there was one notable inhabitant of Dublin who dwelt at St. Patrick's with whom such friendship would not ingratiate him, and who could not have viewed with leniency the virtual suspension of the Test Act by Walpole's ministers in favour of a schoolmaster belonging to the sect that of all others Swift detested with the fiercest bitterness. It is odd, indeed, to think of the contrast between two products which Dublin gave to the world within less than two years. In 1727 the world was startled by the despairing cynicism of "Gulliver's Travels"; and in 1729 the genial optimism, and the generous, if somewhat superficial, enthusiasm of Hutcheson laid the foundations of a new method of education and a new school of thought in Scotland. In that year he was invited by the Senate of Glasgow University to accept the Chair of Moral Philosophy. It was perhaps as well for his future peace that the rest of his life was to be spent else-

where than in the neighbourhood of the "savage indignation" of the dean. He had received some offers, it appears, of preferment in the Irish Church; but he rejected them with a wisdom and good feeling greater than that which prompted others to make such offers.

Hutcheson had already published some books of a kind which the previous generation had produced in sufficient numbers, and of which the coming century was to see in Scotland a very copious crop. The titles sufficiently indicate their character. One was an "Inquiry concerning Beauty"; another an "Inquiry concerning Moral Good"; another an "Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections." They were the fabrics turned out from a workshop whose methods were sound enough, and whose objects were sufficiently laudable. Its operations ranged over that debatable ground that lay between criticism in its modern sense, and proper metaphysical inquiry. In a certain sense they were philosophical, because they examined and theorised upon the powers of the mind and the motives of human action, and professed to probe into the recesses of human knowledge. But before the mystic region of metaphysical inquiry they hung an impenetrable curtain which they painted to look like philosophy, and into that region they refused to penetrate. Those who ventured into it they deemed to be daring and perhaps impious intruders, or they laughed at them as deluded mystics, who accepted as verities the figments of their own imaginations, or who were imposed upon by vain words that signified nothing. On the other hand they narrowed the range of their criticism by too much attention to method, and by making the end and aim of their system the inculcation

of moral principles with which criticism had not any essential connection. The exponents of their school of thought—because, with all their varieties, they belonged essentially to one school—were often men of strong religious principle and devout piety. But their religion stood apart from their moral system, and they treated it as something separate and distinct, to which they were to pay a reverence more or less sincere, but which was not to be the keynote of their teaching. It was not to be a means of penetrating behind the veil that hid the most mysterious problems of human existence, but was only to serve as a more rigid barrier, preventing any attempt to lift that veil. Others again, like Shaftesbury, treated religion as little but a system of imposture, which might be formally accepted, but of which the only real purpose was to impose upon the vulgar.

But with all its limitations the school of thought to which Hutcheson belonged was eminently useful for educational purposes. To the young, whose minds were just opening to the consideration of the larger questions of life, and who sought for something that would give connection and consistency to all branches of knowledge, the teaching they had to supply was admirably stimulative and suggestive. It touched upon every interest in their life; it stirred a wide range of chords in their feelings; and the undoubted earnestness of the teachers made personal contact with these something of which the impression remained as a vivid force in their future lives. But it had a restrictive effect as well. It forced them into one mould of thought, and prevented that free discursiveness of youthful energy which combines a certain boldness and originality with

all the recklessness of undisciplined inquiry. It is not without interest to find an observer so acute as Dr. Carlyle of Inveresk noting that in his day an inefficient professor was not without his advantages. He explained to Lord Elibank, many years later, that the reason why the young clergymen of his generation so far excelled their predecessors was that their professor of divinity was "dull and Dutch and prolix," and the young men were thrown back upon their own resources and formed opinions far more liberal than those they could have got from their professor. But this was a principle upon which it would hardly have done to construct the scheme of a successful university course.

In 1729, then, Hutcheson came to Glasgow. The change must have been a welcome one to the young Dissenter, with his Whiggish principles. Not only did he quit the dreary drudgery of a private school for a position in which he was the authorised representative of an important branch of scientific inquiry, which he could treat according to his own views, but the atmosphere of Glasgow must have been a pleasant change from that of Dublin. He passed from an arena where he was the humble protégé of an unpopular Whig clique, upon which the most vigorous intellect of the city looked askance, and where the choicest society was composed of men who would have crushed the Dissenters into impotence if they could, for one where the academic group of which he became a member held an easy and undisputed supremacy. In place of a society in which a few wealthy men were dominant, and their opponents pressed their political views with the bitterness of exasperation, he found a genial literary circle, where social intercourse was easy and pleasant, and where life was so organised that its

chief attractions were open to men of narrow means. His mood appears clearly enough in his opening address on taking possession of his chair, which was delivered, according to a custom already passing into desuetude, in the Latin language. "*Non levi lætitia*," says he, "*commovebar cum almam matrem Academiam me, suum olim alumnum, in libertatem asseruisse audiveram.*" He was not slow to use that liberty to which his old university had called him.

The duties of his chair were exacting enough. He had to lecture on Natural Religion, on Morals, on Jurisprudence, and on the Greek and Latin moralists. Not content with this, he gave lectures on Sunday evenings to crowded audiences, composed of citizens as well as students, on the Christian evidences. He at once stepped into the position of a public exponent of his themes; and it was a necessity of his success that he should base his teaching upon some central principle. It was the habit of the day to seek for some primary motive upon which our notions of morality were formed. Sometimes such a motive had been sought for as a thing superior to, and independent of, religious principle, as in the case of Shaftesbury. At other times, as with Butler, the doctrines of Christian morality had been shown themselves to yield such a principle, and they had been expounded in a shape which entitled them to rank with other philosophical systems. But in truth this line of inquiry might be carried on with no thought that it could trench on the dangerous ground of religious doctrine. The religious man might base his conduct upon the dictates of revealed religion; but this did not lessen his right to find for himself a consistent system of morality which might claim a logical consistency, and which might buttress

at least, if it did not supplant, the duties imposed upon him by his religious faith. The aim of all these systems of secular morality was not to find a basis for duty and an explanation of man's place in the system of the universe by any metaphysical inquiry, but only to refer all virtuous motives to some common principle, which might give to them an apparent consistency. It was not meant that this common motive operated directly in impelling us to any particular act, but only that if motives were sufficiently analysed they would be found to have a uniform basis, and to be capable of being traced back ultimately to a single principle. This was no very abstruse inquiry. It solved no mysteries. It did not seek to rest itself upon any unassailable logical foundation. It claimed only to be the result of careful observation of human action, and as observation grew and analysis became more systematic, the notion which was formed as to the central principle might alter or become subject to modifications, without an absolute abandonment of the results based upon the inquiries which had preceded.

By Ferguson, as by Shaftesbury, the principle which was held ultimately to regulate our conduct, and to give the motive to virtuous action, was what he called the Moral Sense. It is evident that this, for all practical purposes, was hardly distinguishable from what the religious moralists called Conscience. It accepted, indeed, that part of Christianity which was most easily grasped, and it either ignored, or regarded as something of which it might not venture to treat, the deeper mysteries of the Christian religion. Many might be disposed to deny to such a system the character of philosophy at all; others again might be inclined to say that in its practical bearing upon human action

it sought after pretentious symmetry rather than a real satisfaction of doubts, and was impressed by an ambitious pursuit of formal theories rather than by a vivid desire to realise the actual intricacies of human action. With all that we are not concerned when we attempt to estimate its historical results; and there can be no doubt that as an educational instrument it was admirably fitted for the work that it had to do. It stimulated just that amount of mental interest which young men can readily form. It gave dignity to human conduct, and prevented any tendency to that waywardness of caprice by which young lives can be wrecked through their own perverse ingenuity. If it conducted them to no cloud-capped peaks of metaphysical speculation, it at least prevented them from sinking into the noisome gulfs of self-abandonment.

And its influence in this direction was admirably enforced by the personal contact with such a man as Hutcheson. From the first he commanded the enthusiastic devotion of his students. By character he was eminently fitted to command that devotion. In countless reminiscences we can realise the manner of man he was. His outward aspect did not belie his disposition. Tall and robust of figure, with an open and bright countenance, with a carriage negligent but easy, with unimpaired health, and the subtle charm of absolute simplicity, he made his way to the hearts of his hearers with consummate ease. "He was gay and pleasant," his biographer Leechman tells us, "full of mirth and raillery, familiar and communicative to the last degree, and utterly free from all stateliness and affectation." He became at once a power in the university and amongst the citizens of Glasgow. His helpfulness was boundless, and from a

narrow income he contrived to spare enough for charity to poorer students. Not youths alone, but grown men thronged year after year to his lectures; and we are told that it was no uncommon thing for the same student to attend his course for five or six consecutive years. For the function of public lecturer he was eminently fitted, not by his gift of eloquence alone, but by the electric power of a quick and ready enthusiasm. To the last he refused to write his lectures, and delivered them without notes, "walking," as we are told by Dr. Carlyle, "backwards and forwards in the area of his room."

As his outward aspect and manner so was the disposition of the man. His temper was quick, but so well under control that its vivacity only added to his charm. It is indeed a sufficient proof of his attractive power that though his own sympathies were with the High-flying section, he commanded the unbounded admiration of the Moderates in the Church—and that their cordiality was not lessened even by the fact that his old Dissenting predilections made him favour the Anti-Patronage party in the Church. The part he took in ecclesiastical disputes was not a large one; and the Moderate party, if they did not find him an ally in their Erastianism, at least knew that his teaching was of a sort which struck at the very root of that illiberal religious creed against which they had to fight. The tide of the battle was running almost too quickly in their favour; and already amongst the younger clergy there was a strain of modish scepticism which was soon to infuse into their sermons a feeble affectation of philosophical argument which scorned to deal with the simpler truths of Christianity. So far as Hutcheson was personally concerned he discouraged such a habit;

but it is doubtful whether, in spite of himself, his teaching did not tend to foster it. His undisguised admiration of Shaftesbury was certainly a trait which might not unnaturally raise suspicion of his orthodoxy in the minds of those who were not unreasonably nervous as to the encroachments of scepticism; and however strong his personal piety might be, it was doubtful whether it received much additional weight from his vindicating for Shaftesbury a sincere attachment to the Christian religion.

Ferguson's tenure of the chair at Glasgow was not long. He died in 1746. But many others in the Scottish universities arose to carry on the work which he had begun. Amongst those whose personal influence was strong, although we have no evidence of the basis on which it rested, was John Stevenson, who was Professor of Logic at Edinburgh from 1730 to 1775. He was admitted, even by those who placed his influence most high, to be wanting in originality, and to have been content to rest his teaching on the accepted methods of the school of Locke, which had at least the advantage of being simple and easy of comprehension. But Stevenson was evidently a man who could appreciate the merits of new theories, even better perhaps than those who excogitated empirical systems of their own. In his earlier days, as he was fond of recalling to his later students, he was a member of the Rankenian Club, which had succeeded in drawing Bishop Berkeley into a correspondence as to certain questions which raised doubts regarding his system in the minds of the Scottish students. But Berkeley's system never throve in Scottish soil, and stirred only the enthusiasm of the younger students. Stevenson fell back later on the less fertile and inspiring products of his own

country. Later in life, he welcomed the appearance of a sounder method in the Scottish school, and one which approached more nearly to a philosophical system, in the writings of Reid; and he was not withheld by any slavish obedience to his older tenets from remodelling his lectures so as to embrace the leading features of Reid's philosophy. But with him, as in a certain sense with Hutcheson, it was his personal influence which chiefly impressed his students. He taught them to apply the principles of the ethical system which they learned, and the disciplined argumentative power with which it furnished them—which was after all of far more importance than its logical completeness or consistency—to the problems of ordinary life, and to the formation of a correct literary taste; and it was no small tribute to his power that the historian, Principal Robertson, was wont to acknowledge that he owed more to Stevenson's instruction—and above all to his lectures on Aristotle's "Poetics" and on Longinus "On the Sublime"—than to any other influence in the course of his academic studies. Nor does this testimony of Robertson stand alone. Dr. Alexander Carlyle tells the same story. "Whether or not it was owing to the time of life at which we entered this class, being all about fifteen years of age or upwards, when the mind begins to open"—and a Scottish youth of last century did not consider himself a tyro at that age—"or to the excellence of the lecturer and the nature of some of the subjects, we could not then say, but all of us received the same impression—that our minds were more enlarged and that we received greater benefit from that class than from any other." Like Hutcheson his kindness to his students was marked and constant; and in the composite picture of eighteenth-century Scotland, with its

keen activity of intellectual interest, many men of greater learning and more imposing pretensions played a smaller part than Professor Stevenson during these five-and-forty years. His memory is none the less worth recalling because no neglected volumes with his name on the title-page load the shelves of our libraries.

But it was not within the walls of the universities alone that the prevailing taste for philosophical speculation made itself felt. Within these walls its objects were mainly educational, and its tendencies were so far concealed by the practical application to the affairs of life which it was the duty of its exponents to impress. Beyond the academic classrooms there were two others especially—men of very different calibre from one another—who contributed to the body of philosophic literature which Scotland was then amassing. These were David Hume and Henry Home, better known by the judicial title of Lord Kames, which he assumed on his accession to the Bench. They could hardly be classed together, were it not that they were both philosophical writers without being professors, and that both fell under the suspicion of heretical leanings from which the professors were exempt. David Hume was without question the man of greatest mental grasp whom Scotland produced in the eighteenth century. To him the central ambition of his life was literary fame, the absorbing pleasure of his life literary interest, and he contemplated the controversies of his day with a serene and imperturbable ease and indifference to which all his contemporaries were strangers. It cost him no trouble to grasp the fact that the so-called philosophy of his day was a mass of disordered fragments, and that the nonchalant

materialism of Locke was destructive of any creed based on a sure foundation. He carried that system only a step further in showing that on its basis all knowledge was accidental, and that the theories that were propounded with so much confidence were conjectures only. It was not his to reconstruct a system of metaphysics: that was left for a later age and for another country. But the work he did he did for all time; and it was to show that a system of knowledge based only on experience could attain no higher authority than that which experience could give. In practice and in character he was a philosopher in a sense that none of the others were: serene in temper, unmoved by attack, calm in the face of an almost sublime abnegation of all that gave life its deepest meaning to most men, and looking down with an indifference, which only genius could prevent from degenerating into arrogance, on all the wrangling of the day. No man could carry a creed of despair with more imperturbable good-humour, or could maintain a standard of morality with more perfect consistency upon the somewhat meagre motives of innate pride and dignity. The reason was that Hume's literary genius made him express in his own attitude something that is more or less a truth of every man's experience; and that his literary sympathy enabled him to understand and appreciate, if he did not share, the religious motives that stand as sentinels to human conduct. It has often been the habit to represent Hume's formal deference to the dictates of revealed religion as only a species of elaborate sarcasm. It is hard to say on what proof such a forced interpretation rests. The symptoms of religious feeling which showed themselves in his temperament—symptoms supported

by too many authorities to be easily ignored—have been studiously minimised: but to do so is only to misunderstand the nature of the man, and to be blind to that wide range of literary sympathy which made all human feelings find some echo in his heart.

It was after a wandering and unsettled youth, to which the solitary anchor was his literary ambition, that Hume fixed himself for some years in France, and there composed the book which was to mark his philosophical position. It was written when he was only twenty-five, and probably no book of the kind, destined to exercise such an extended influence, was ever written by a man of that age, certainly never with greater ease or more supreme command of his own ideas. It was not till 1739–40 that the "Treatise on Human Nature" was given to the world, and its reception by a generation which failed to grasp its real importance in the history of thought might well have daunted a man of less consummate courage. In Hume's own words, the book "fell dead born from the press without reaching such a distinction as even to excite a murmur amongst the zealots." But he was too well poised to allow such a disappointment to unman him. "I was resolved not to be an enthusiast in philosophy while I was blaming other enthusiasts," he writes to a friend. He was confident of the ultimate prevalence of his views: he never wavered from the belief that, on the basis of the theories that had been accepted by the great mass of those who troubled themselves about such matters, his inferences were necessary and inevitable. "My principles," he writes to the same friend, as a matter of certain conviction, "would produce a revolution in philosophy: and revolutions of this kind are not easily brought

about." But he also recognised that time was needed for the real bearing of his ideas to be felt, that when felt they would meet with no favourable reception, and that he had essayed a thorny path. "My fondness for what I imagined new discoveries made me overlook all common rules of prudence, and having enjoyed the usual satisfaction of projectors, 'tis but just I should meet with their disappointments." Meanwhile he is not overwhelmed in despair. "In a day or two I shall be as easy as ever." No man ever possessed in a more supreme degree that faculty of "seeing the favourable more than the unfavourable side of things": a turn of mind which, as he himself declares, "it is more happy to possess than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year."

For a dozen years, with intervals of employment abroad, which enlarged his experience and widened his range, Hume continued to produce several volumes of moral and political essays, and recast his philosophical speculations. The special features of these it is the business of the historian of literature or philosophy to discuss in detail. We are concerned only with their effect on the age when they were written. Their destructive side was only slowly appreciated by the world at large, and even amongst those who were engaged in such discussions, the conclusions of Hume's philosophy seemed merely to be a new phase of the never-ending theories which they were accustomed to propound, and not what he knew them to be, "a revolution in thought." They accepted him as a new member of a philosophical debating society; and although they combated his arguments, opposed his conclusions, and invented new theories to overturn his special views, yet after

all they considered him as one of themselves, as an associate of their fraternity, and as an ally in the common fight against the "zealots." It was their business to encourage discussion, and they must not look too severely upon any extreme conclusion to which the pursuit of independent thought might lead. Here and there replies, animated by a more determined spirit of hostility, were put forth; but it was only as years passed that the full effect of Hume's position was appreciated, and that a solid mass of opinion was aroused to bitter opposition. So far as Scotland was concerned the hostile opposition arose, not from those who combated Hume's system by weapons taken from the armoury of Scotland, but from those who disliked and suspected all philosophical discussion. Those who met him on his own ground disputed his conclusions, but they did so with the tempered hostility of brethren in the craft. Their moderation of tone was enhanced by the personal friendship which Hume's character commanded. They preferred to throw in their lot with him rather than with those whom they classed with the bigoted fanatics of a former generation; and it is not surprising that when Hume was a candidate, first for a professorship in the university, and then for the librarianship of the Advocates' Library, he found all that claimed to be enlightened amongst the choice spirits of Edinburgh ranged enthusiastically upon his side.

But Hume's was not a spirit which could find its satisfaction in maintaining a struggle which he knew well must increase in bitterness. His only philosophical principles were simple and easily stated: having set them forth he found little charm or in-

terest in defending them by any subtlety of argument, or finely drawn reposts. His ambition lay, above all things, towards literary fame; and he found its satisfaction rather in historical composition, to which he turned in 1754. It may be that Hume abandoned the sublimity of speculative effort, and, as some have thought, was content with triumphs in a lesser field. But we are concerned only with his place and work in developing the thought of the century. His task therein was completed when he turned to the more congenial employment of historical writing, after he had achieved independence, and had rounded off a life in which success had been attained not by feverish effort, nor by rushing into the arena with angry and splenetic zeal, but by calm and persistent pursuit of deliberate aims. He had said his word; he knew that its effect was certain and inevitable; from the undignified polemics that insistence would have made inevitable, he resolutely withdrew. He was no perfervid missionary of free thought to benighted zealots; but only a man of unrivalled clearness of argument and expression, who recoiled from no conclusions to which his reason led him, but withal succeeded in keeping on pleasant terms with those who would have shrunk from the daring boldness of his attitude had they only understood it, or had they fancied that he was doing anything else than propounding a new theory on matters which formed a convenient subject of harmless and withal interesting speculations. Personally, he had every quality that could attract friendship, and smooth the intercourse of life; a comprehensive generosity, an eager interest in the affairs of others, a gentle and playful humour that sweetened all around him, even if it was partly due

to a detachment from the ordinary impulses of humanity that was almost cynical. So warm, however, was the affection which he inspired, that his friend Adam Smith seemed to be indulging in no language of hyperbole, when he used with regard to the chief assailant of commonly received religious ideas in that age, the following words: "Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit."

The other extra-academical philosopher was a man of a very different type. Henry Home was the representative of an old but impoverished family in Berwickshire, whose aim in life was to secure a competence by the practice of the law, and to attain to a place on the judicial Bench. In this he succeeded, by persevering industry and a careful attention to the strict routine of professional duty. But he found that the practice of the law, then gradually broadening from the cramping limits of the older text-books into a system in which a clear grasp of principles and an acute mental habit of applying them were essential, was greatly aided by extended studies. These studies, with a restless industry, he engrafted upon his professional training, with little assistance from any foundation of liberal study in his youth. To this work he brought a mind well practised in the subtleties of the law, but lacking that critical faculty which is rarely developed except by sound preliminary training in a wider field. Throughout all his discursive wanderings in the field of philosophical or political speculation, his curiosity was more conspicuous than his desire for sound knowledge, and

his eagerness in the pursuit of some specious line of argument than his sense of proportion. Hume's contributions to philosophy were completed before he had reached his fortieth year, and were illumined by the clear light of genius, and regulated by the calm tenor of a mind which sought only the full development of its own powers, and treated all inferior objects with a stoical contempt. Lord Kames began his disquisitions only when he had attained to professional eminence, and had hardened the fibre of his mind on the subtleties of the law. Hume had all the directness and simplicity that arose from a clear ray of thought running through all his works: Lord Kames involved himself in a thick tangle of physical and mental experiment, and with painful effort pieced together a mass of inconsistent theories built upon notions that he formed as the result of his own unguided and discursive reading; and delivered the whole in a cumbrous diction, relieved by no literary grace. It pleased him to revive the doctrine of Final Causes, and to trace from the supposed certainty of their action, a convenient plan which was not inconsistent with, and might therefore by a convenient mental effort be supposed to prove, the existence of a Deity; and by a similar effort of mental agility, the existence of a principle of virtue might easily be conceived as a possible Final Cause in the region of ethics. The old contradiction between Freewill and Necessity he solved by a well-adjusted compromise, in which Necessity was conceded as a law of the universe, but Freewill was conceded as an adroit contrivance by which Divine power deluded humanity into a mistaken belief in its own liberty. To have accepted the views of Hume would have been an inconvenient and dangerous excess of boldness on the part

of a senator of the Court of Justice, and it was therefore necessary to contrive a good working theory which might claim exemption from any accusation of heresy. His attitude towards religion was indeed rather that of the humorist than the professed sceptic. Reverence was as little an element in his character, as was the earnestness of sincere doubt. His speculations were indeed the result rather of restless curiosity than of a craving for more light. But meanwhile Hume was courted by him not only as an enlightened ally, but as a cordial and sympathetic friend, from whom he was parted only by some unimportant details of philosophical nomenclature. The lawyer's love for a definite statement was satisfied by his own crude and whimsical theories; and he could hardly be expected to apply to himself the words which Dr. Johnson used of such optimistic moralists as were common in that day, whose very superficial orthodoxy approached closely to an absolute renunciation of religious feeling, "Surely a man who seems not completely master of his own opinion should have spoken more cautiously of Omnipotence, nor have presumed to say what it could perform, or what it could prevent."

Lord Kames was a man whose words have been voiceless to any generation beyond his own. Even by his own friends his speculations can hardly have carried real weight, however indulgently they were treated as the efforts—earnest enough in their way—of an acute and ingenious, but ill-trained and ill-balanced intellect. They could only have had any vitality of interest to a generation singularly vacant of any engrossing occupation or any profound thought; and it was only because such vacuity was in a certain measure characteristic of that generation that they

found a partial audience. But they are none the less of historical interest as showing how the activity of a keen, restless, and discursive intellect, with more superficiality than earnestness, was spent in speculations which were conceived to buttress religion and to constitute a philosophical system.

His activity was, however, many-sided. He sought, with perhaps more zeal than discretion, to play the part of a literary Mæcenas. He was energetic in schemes of agricultural development, and was not forgetful of the interest of his tenants, nor without considerable influence upon various national improvements. Sceptical as we may well be of any high estimate of his mental calibre, he was a characteristic figure in his day, and accentuates many of its traits by exaggeration and by travesty. He represented all the indomitable energy of the race, and its persevering struggle against odds. When he attained to the dignity of the Bench, the long tension brought a reaction, and he turned with zest to the pursuits of what he deemed elegant literature and lofty speculation, undeterred by any consciousness of the limitations of his early training. He recompensed the dreary toil of thirty years by taking his judicial duties lightly, or by indulging his own vein, and perplexing his colleagues in wire-drawn disquisitions, which savoured more of the sophist's chair than the judicial Bench. As was often the case with his countrymen, he relieved the long restraint of toil by indulgence in antics that frequently fell to the ridiculous, and cultivated with assiduity the reputation of a wit, which degenerated not rarely into the indecency of the buffoon, and suffered the restraints neither of dignity nor of good taste. The stories we read of

his sallies after he reached the Bench[1] and relaxed himself in the ease of convivial society, remind us of those which at a somewhat earlier day relieved the monotonous rigidity of the uncompromising Covenanters, when human nature at odd intervals asserted its power of throwing off a too prolonged restraint. He was not a great lawyer; he was in no sense a philosopher; his literary taste was frequently perverse; his political speculations were whimsical and often absurd; his wit had often much of boyish mischief, asserting itself against the restraints of authority, and never rose to the serenity of humour. But in his indomitable energy, in his industry, in his freedom from timidity or any bashfulness bred of his own defects, he was characteristic of his age. That he found relaxation and interest in quasi-philosophical speculation did not make him less so.

But to return again to the academical exponents of the thought of the day, we come next to one whose ethical speculations led him into a field which he has largely made his own. Adam Smith's niche in the temple of fame is that of the political economist; that branch of thought which has been nicknamed the "dismal science," and which it is the almost avowed boast of some in our own day to have banished to Saturn.

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy in 1723. From the Grammar School of his native town he passed to the University of Glasgow in 1737, and from thence, as Snell Exhibitioner, to Balliol College, Oxford. It is a curious fact that the endowment which secured for him his introduction to an English university was

[1] It was his habit on the Bench to address his brother judges as "Ye bitches."

one founded in the seventeenth century with the express purpose of training clergymen for the Episcopal Church of Scotland, with which Smith, like most of the Scottish literary school, was entirely out of sympathy. But if he did not imbibe at Oxford the tenets of the High Church party, he drank deeply from the fountain of her scholarship. He remained there for seven years, and returned to Kirkcaldy, with no fixed aim as to his future career, but that of pursuing literature and speculation—a pursuit upon which the Scottish student was able, through the widening opportunities of university life, to enter with fair expectation of a moderate competence unassisted by the depressing influence of literary patrons. He had been strongly impressed by the teaching of Hutcheson, and he began his career as a professional exponent of literary themes by lecturing at Edinburgh on rhetoric and belles-lettres in the years that followed 1748. It was then that he became a member of the Edinburgh literary circle, and formed an intimate and affectionate friendship with Hume; and in 1751 he was appointed to the Chair of Logic, and in the following year to that of Philosophy, in Glasgow, which had been vacated by the death of Hutcheson four years before, and had since been occupied by one whose tenure of the office was unimportant. In the Chair of Logic Smith devoted his time mostly to those prelections on rhetoric and belles-lettres which had occupied his time at Edinburgh. In the Chair of Moral Philosophy he followed the method usual in his time of developing a theory of ethics. The school to which Smith belonged discarded, as mystical and fruitless speculation, all search into a metaphysical basis for the moral instincts of mankind, which should seek to give to these instincts

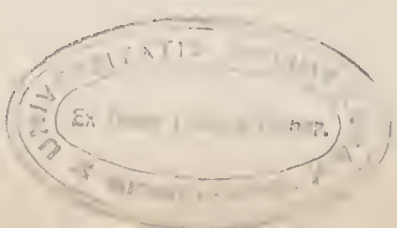
their place in the scheme of the universe, or to fix them amongst the eternal verities. They rightly esteemed that the foundation of such a scheme had been shattered by the preceding encroachments of materialism, and that until some constructive system should take the place of the *débâcle* brought about by Locke, and carried to its logical conclusion by Hume, no such universal scheme was possible. On the other hand they shrank, as moral citizens and eminently estimable men, to expose the poverty of the ethical speculation of the day by resting all moral sanction upon historical or conventional foundations. Instead of this, they sought to explain moral ideas by referring them back to some apparently simple element in human nature of which they were but one manifestation. Hutcheson had found such an element in a moral sense which had its basis in the affections. Smith found it in sympathy, and his was an explanation congenial to one who regarded men chiefly as members of the body politic, and whose chief interests lay in propounding theories as to the laws by which that body was governed, and as to the maxims upon which its relations should rest. It may be doubted whether Adam Smith's theory of sympathy as the source of our moral ideas was anything more than a speciously convenient classification; but it was evidently an easy transition from such a theory to turn to disquisitions upon the laws that should regulate the action, or guide the development, of social and political units.

Even in the days of his Glasgow professorship his speculations had taken this turn, and the foundation of his political economy had been expounded in his lectures there. But in 1764 he was tempted, by an offer to accompany the young Duke of Buccleuch in

the Grand Tour, to resign his professorship; and the circles into which he was thereby thrown, as well as the experience he thereby gained, contributed powerfully to intensify his prevailing bias. In the year that followed his residence on the Continent he devoted himself to the study of economical questions, and this study resulted in what was undoubtedly an epoch-making work—his "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations." The degree of originality which that work can claim has long been a disputed point. Adam Smith had, no doubt, imbibed in France many of the ideas of the French Encyclopædists. But it was with perfect honesty and with perfect right that he claimed the merit of independent thought. Because, in truth, the ideas to which he gave expression were in the air, and it was only natural that each man who could give them shape and body for his own countrymen should feel himself entitled to the praise of an original thinker. It has been claimed for Smith that his position gave him admirable opportunities of studying practically the operation of economical laws. He lived in a commercial community. He was on terms of intimacy with practical men. He was laborious in collecting statistics in support of his views. He had seen much of foreign countries, and been intimate with men of many various types. This theory of his development of an economical system is not without its specious side. But it will not stand the test of strict examination. As a man of business Smith was singularly inept. In society he was shy and diffident. He was absent-minded, and the theories which he propounded in conversation were often eccentric and ill-balanced. No man could have been more unversed in all the ways of practical life. As a fact

he only propounded, as a thinker and a recluse, ideas which were the result of historical evolution, and he is one more amongst countless instances of the truth so constantly exemplified, that ideas which are vaguely in the air often receive their embodiment, and are aided in their ultimate effect, by the solitary efforts of a thinker, who to all appearance is absolutely removed from all vital contact with practical life. The credit which is thus due to him is really far greater than that which would be his if it were proved that he had reached his conclusions by building them upon a laborious edifice of personal observation and carefully gathered statistics.

But there was an essential flaw in his system, however extensive its results, and however indisputable were some of its positions. Smith proclaimed the doctrine of Free Trade, and that doctrine eventually bore sway amongst his countrymen, and vitally affected their future history. But in building that doctrine upon a moral basis he was essentially wrong, since it led him to promulgate, as necessary and universal truths, what were indeed but phases of historical development. The mistake arose from a certain analogy between his ethical and his economic theories. Each endeavoured to claim for mere explanations the authority of moral principles. It was just as true, and just as false, that human society rested upon a basis of free commercial relations, as it was that moral obligations rested upon a basis of sympathy. As a fact, both were only explanations of a prevailing tendency. And also as a fact, just as moral obligations have a basis higher than sympathy, so human society must rest upon foundations which often disregard the tenets of political economy.



This flaw in his system does not destroy its usefulness. The course of history was moving in the direction which Smith indicated, and it was well that the trend of that history should be set forth in the systematic exposition of a solitary thinker. But the universality which the system claimed, the moral authority which, in consequence of its origin, it was forced to assume, were essentially unreal. Smith compiled an economical code, and he claimed for it the absolute truth of a philosophical system, and the rigorous authority of a moral law. Not a little of the opposition afterwards encountered by his system, not a little of the irritation bred by the assumption of moral superiority on the part of the political party which became its chief representative, were due to the error, so natural to his time, and so characteristic of the school of thought to which he belonged, of mistaking their own explanation of mental processes for a binding moral law, and their own account of one phase of historical development for a necessary and universal truth.

But with all drawbacks, Adam Smith must be counted not only one of the greatest influences, but also one of the most characteristic figures of the age. He was a man of simple life, wrapt in abstract thought, a stranger to all the baser ambitions of ordinary life, yet devoting himself, with singular tenacity of purpose, and with singular boldness, to work out a theory which had a profound effect upon the most practical side of human life. In another age than his, the recluse student, who struck his contemporaries as one utterly lacking even ordinary discernment of character, would have hung back in timidity from propounding views which were to be effectual only by moulding the action

of men. His artlessness, his modesty, his occasional wayward eccentricity of view, which appeared to his intimates as almost childish, gave additional interest to the concentrated perseverance with which he worked out his system. His ordinary conversation consisted of long philosophical harangues, varied by fits of silence and reverie, and by the utterance of paradoxical opinions which he was ready to retract upon a show of opposition.[1] Averse to disputation, and unwilling to excite alarm or to scandalise religious opinion—he yet drifted away almost insensibly from that safe anchorage of dogmatic belief which seemed to the outsider the destined refuge of every Scotsman. To him Voltaire was the greatest genius whom France had ever produced. Hume was his beloved friend—nearest to the ideal of a perfectly wise and virtuous man which human frailty would permit. Yet he lived unassailed by any rancour of religious dogmatism, and only caused an occasional mild resentment, when during those religious exercises to which no conscientious scruples made him refuse to conform, some suggestion which came to him in a fit of reverie or abstraction caused a smile to pass over his face. He found a difficulty, we are told, in conforming to the custom which required that a professor should open his class with prayer. But when informed that the rule could not be waived, he complied by uttering a philosophical disquisition in the form of a prayer.[2]

Adam Smith died in 1790, before the excesses of the French Revolution might have brought to him, as they did to others like him, some doubt as to the tendency of opinions with which they had largely sympathised.

[1] Carlyle's "Reminiscences," p. 279.
[2] Ochtertyre MSS., vol. i. p. 463.

His career as professor ended in 1764, in which year two other men, destined to play conspicuous parts, entered upon their tenure of philosophical chairs in Glasgow and in Edinburgh respectively. These were Thomas Reid and Adam Ferguson. They presented a strong contrast to one another in many ways; but each was strongly characteristic of the age in which he lived.

Thomas Reid was born in 1710 in a remote village in Kincardineshire, where his forefathers had for centuries been planted as ministers of the Scottish Church in her various vicissitudes. His mother was one of the twenty-nine children of a Banffshire laird named Gregory, whose descendants furnished a long line of distinguished pioneers of science both to the Scottish and the English universities. Like his forefathers, Thomas Reid became a minister of the Church of Scotland; but the keenness of doctrinal disputes had no attraction for him, and he took no prominent part in the ecclesiastical contests that raged in her Church Courts. He had as little about him of the religious reformer as of the religious bigot; and to those accustomed to think of the Scottish clergy as the embodiment of covenanting zeal and doctrinal subtlety, the clerical career of Reid, typical though it in truth was of many of his brethren, must come as something of a surprise. For a time after he had completed his course at Marischal College, Aberdeen, Reid lingered on as librarian, an office which gave him ample opportunity for study, and his interest seems chiefly to have lain in the direction of mathematical research. As a young man he visited England, and under the protection of his uncle, David Gregory, Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, he had abundant opportunity of access to the

leaders of English thought and scholarship. In 1737 he was presented by the Aberdeen University authorities to the living of New Machar; and there he became a victim of the anti-patronage zeal which then disturbed the Church. He was not allowed to take possession of the charge without opposition that went the length of personal insult and violence. But his quiet earnestness, although aided by none of the partisanship of the zealot, won its way to the hearts of the parishioners, and made him beloved amongst them. "We fought against Dr. Reid when he came," said an old parishioner long afterwards, "and we would have fought for him when he went away." And yet he had gained their devotion by no compliance with the more rigorous doctrinal notions, and by no sympathy with the narrowness of the older tenets. His modesty—perhaps it is not unjust to add, his absorption in other interests—led him to read the discourses of Tillotson instead of composing sermons of his own. The practice is one which laymen of a later day might not resent; but it would hardly have proved acceptable to Scottish zealots of the older type, and it sufficiently proves that a Scottish clergyman of the day had other interests than those comprised in doctrinal disputes, and that his congregation might yield their respect and their affection to a different type of spiritual teacher than the moss preacher who had kindled the fiery zeal, and fed the sectarian pride, of their forefathers.

While still minister of New Machar he published some results of his philosophical studies in the *Transactions* of the Royal Society of London, and his reputation as a man of learning advanced. In 1752 he was recalled to his university as Professor of Philosophy—a somewhat comprehensive theme, which was taken to

comprise physics and mathematics, as well as logic and ethics. The principle of the Regenting system, already alluded to, by which a single teacher conducted his pupils through a wide range of studies, still prevailed largely at Aberdeen, although in the southern universities it had given way to the Professorial system, by which one man became the authorised exponent of one subject only. But the wide range of his duties did not change the bent of Reid's speculations; and it was during his professorship at Aberdeen that he produced in 1764 the "Inquiry into the Human Mind," which permanently fixed his philosophical position, and which procured for him, in the same year, an invitation from the University of Glasgow, to occupy the Chair of Moral Philosophy, then vacated by Adam Smith. He held the chair until 1780, and thereafter he published, as the fruit of his later studies, the "Essays on the Intellectual Powers" in 1785, and the "Essays on the Active Powers" in 1788. In the three works named we have the full exposition of his system.

This is not the place to describe in detail, or to discuss, the foundations of that system. It is sufficient to point out only its place in the history of Scottish thought, and to show how it is characteristic of the time, and yet has features of its own which give to it a special interest and importance. As we have seen, Reid was no religious or doctrinal zealot. Polemical discussion was hateful to him, and he was not likely to be found in the ranks of those who looked with horror on philosophical speculations which seemed to shake traditional creeds, and who attacked with partisan zeal the exponents of these speculations. But his attitude is chiefly interesting as it shows how a man of devout

and earnest character, endowed with a marvellous faculty of patient and persistent thought, could spend his life in maintaining a firm foundation for fundamental truths, with no aid from the rancour of fanatical zeal, and without holding a brief for any narrow doctrinal creed. More than any other of his contemporaries he combined an absolute devotion to philosophical inquiry, with the calmness and the chastened moderation that belong to the philosophical character. To most of his philosophical contemporaries, doctrinal Christianity was a matter in which they had at best only an occasional interest. They would fain keep on civil, even on respectful relations with its avowed adherents, and any attack upon it they deemed inexpedient, and would even, in a mild way, combat philosophical tenets which seemed likely to subvert its foundations. But further than that they were indisposed to go. For their philosophical speculations they drew an ample arena, the combats on which were conducted according to stated rules, and all the combatants, whatever the variety of their arms and of the devices on their shields, were to be treated more or less as members of a brotherhood, whose variety of opinion contributed additional interest to their not unfriendly encounters. On the fringe of that arena there lay the wide extent of conventional belief and traditional doctrine, which they regarded as something outside their pale of interest, and the consuming zeal of which they were scrupulous not to imitate. Such an attitude might be enlightened, dignified, and even intellectually bracing, but it did not contribute either to earnestness or to sincerity of thought.

With all this Reid was essentially in contrast. He remained on friendly terms with his intellectual con-

temporaries. He was divided from them by no bitterness of partisanship. His wide range of interest was in sympathy with theirs. He adopted many of their methods. Like them, he looked on the inductive method propounded by Bacon as the sole guide for human inquiry, and vied with them in abjuring the errors of metaphysical hypothesis. He professed himself anxious to carry into the sphere of mental and moral science the principles which Bacon had advocated in physical inquiry; and it was in obedience to this anxiety that he applied himself to what was called an examination of the powers of the mind. So far Reid resembled the others, and in method seemed to follow their example. But, in truth, it is the aim of his researches far more than their method that fixes his place in philosophical inquiry. His object was to vindicate the fundamental laws of belief, and to place truth on an unassailable foundation. If he proceeded by the inductive method, it was to lead to a conclusion the very opposite of that materialism which the inductive method might seem to favour. It was to prove that materialism was itself only one of those metaphysical hypotheses which its supporters had so uniformly decried.

His method was not really a purely inductive one, as he himself would fain have believed. Its sheet-anchor was the foundation of belief as something independent of all hypothesis, defying explanation or analysis, and for that very reason to be accepted as an unassailable truth. But he proceeded to support this by driving home his inquiries into the phenomena of the mind, and by so turning attention away from any hypothesis as to what may be accepted as the basis of knowledge. It was not his to establish a metaphysi-

cal refutation of materialism; that was reserved for others in different surroundings, and unfettered by the intellectual habits characteristic of Reid's time and country. But by his persistent inquiry into the laws of thought, he placed on a higher level the acceptance of their essential truth and of their unassailable necessity; he vindicated for thought that sovereign power which could not admit the arbitrament of any alien tribunal, which defied any analysis, and which baffled the impotence of any hypothesis which sought to explain it. His principle of common sense was the central point in the system. The name provoked opposition, and it is undoubtedly open to the objection of using a term of ordinary language, where it denotes mother-wit, or practical judgment, in a technical sense, to embrace the primary and universal truths which the human mind is compelled to accept. But the very homeliness of the term had no doubt its attraction for Reid, who desired above all things to find for this supreme and fundamental sovereignty of thought an acceptance more ready than would have been accorded to the jargon of philosophical technicalities. Whatever fault may be found with his nomenclature, the central feature of his system, by means of which he controlled and steadied the speculations of those of his countrymen who might otherwise have been led to extremes which they little contemplated, was just this doctrine of common sense. It was by this that he attained to a position essentially different from his contemporaries, however much he adopted their methods. Had he broken away from these, his influence might have been smaller than it actually was. He worked through his own countrymen, and he affected them mainly because he used the methods and adopted the phraseology of

their school. It was this which helped to make them accept the central principles of his system—so essentially different from those to which their more superficial inquiries were conducting them. The bolder and more pronounced materialists of England, such as Priestley and Darwin, perceived how Reid's system told against their own, and knew no measure in the energy of their attacks upon it. On the other hand, in another country and amongst very different surroundings, a new edifice of philosophical speculation, more truly akin to Reid's than any other of his time, was being raised by Imanuel Kant. It is odd to notice how Dugald Stewart—the disciple and biographer of Reid—had so little conception of the real trend of Reid's system, as to append to the praise of Reid, a warning against "the new doctrines and new phraseology on the subject, which have lately become fashionable among some metaphysicians in Germany."

Reid's tenure of his chair came to an end in 1780, and he died in 1796. His life had been a singularly calm one, and his chief characteristics had been an indomitable faculty of patient thought and a sincerity of purpose that never wavered. Such influence as he possessed was gained by quiet and persistent effort; and he did not affect his contemporaries either by any marked originality of genius, or by a striking or eccentric personality. His contemporary exponent of moral philosophy in Edinburgh was a man of a very different type. There could not be a contrast more marked than that between the quiet and simple minister of New Machar, pursuing the even tenor of his way with the silent and unobtrusive modesty of the secluded student, and the bustling, impetuous, and somewhat theatrical figure that now comes upon the stage.

Adam Ferguson was born in 1723 in the Highland village of Logierait, where his father was minister, and where he was near enough to the turbulent elements amongst the Highland clans to include amongst his family traditions some experience of the realities of civil war. He had no inclination to the Jacobite cause in these days when its hopes ran high, and his first publication was a translation of a sermon delivered in Gaelic to the Highland regiment of which he was chaplain, denouncing the Pope and the Pretender with sound Whiggish orthodoxy; but he was none the less, in affection as well as in character, a thorough Celt, with all the impulsiveness and dash that belonged to the race; and in later days, when Jacobitism was only a romantic memory, he was wont to delight his friends by his singing of Jacobite songs. Alone amongst the philosophers he spoke the language, and was stirred by the traditions of Gaul, and retained for that race to the end of his life the passionate attachment which it never fails to inspire. After he had mingled in the gay society of Paris, and learned the ways of fashionable life, he still cherished his admiration for the characteristic traits of his own people. "Had I not been in the Highlands of Scotland," he writes long after, "I might be of their mind who think the inhabitants of Paris and Versailles the only polite people in the world." But amidst the Highland glens he found a courtesy all the more perfect that it was untaught. He sees in the Highland clansman, who had never passed beyond the mountains that shut his glen from the world, one who "can perfectly perform kindness with dignity; can discern what is proper to oblige," and who, "having never seen a superior, does not know what it is to be embarrassed."

From the school of Perth, Ferguson passed to the University of St. Andrews, and thence to the divinity classes at Edinburgh. In 1744 the offer made to him by the Duchess of Athole, of a chaplaincy in the Black Watch, made it needful that he should be licensed to preach after less than the usual probation, and this allowance was granted.

With his regiment Ferguson passed to the scene of war, and he was present with them at the battle of Fontenoy. According to report, he did not confine himself strictly to his spiritual duties. Scott tells how, when the regiment charged, the commanding officer found his chaplain at the head of the column with a broadsword in his hand. He was obliged to remind him that his commission did not warrant his presence there. "Damn my commission," cried the chaplain, whose Celtic blood was stirred by the scene; and he threw it to his colonel. Whether the story is true or not, the undaunted chaplain gained on the battlefield an experience which stood him in good stead as moralist and as historian, and he loved to recall the scene in order to give fresh point to a well-turned enunciation of some moral exhortation, that had the ring of Roman eloquence. "The author has had occasion to see the game of life played in camps, on board of ships, and in presence of an enemy, with the same or greater ease than in the most secure situation," he tells us in the preface to his "Moral Science." It would not be fair to grudge him the benefit of such a picturesque allusion, or to inquire too exactly how far it advances any philosophical argument.

It may be doubted whether his formal profession as a minister of the Church of Scotland had attractions as strong for Adam Ferguson as that military experience

which fortune threw in his way. He continued to compose sermons, which had a certain verve and eloquence of their own; but they were moral essays of a somewhat pretentious kind, in which religion played only a secondary part. In this he merely reflected, in a more than usually vigorous manner, what was a mode of the day, which endeavoured to get rid of the old doctrinal subtleties by turning its attention to a scheme of ethics which differed but little from that which was expounded by the moralists of the later Roman republic. Some ludicrous stories are told of Ferguson in this connection. We hear how he had lent a sermon to an ignorant and unlettered brother in church, who astonished his hearers by preaching on the superiority of intellectual to mere superficial qualities, supporting his thesis by numerous quotations from Plato and Aristotle, with whose writings he was not understood to have any previous acquaintance. Further inquiry elicited the very frank confession that the sermon was the composition of the militant chaplain of the 42nd Highlanders.

In 1754 he resigned his chaplaincy, moved thereto perhaps more by weariness of the clerical profession than by any desire of a more restful position in which to pursue its aims. At all events, from that time forth he abandoned the ministerial office. "I am a downright layman," he writes to Adam Smith, and begs to be no longer addressed by the epithet of "Reverend." Henceforward he turned his attention to ethical and critical essays, with those excursions into political speculation which suited the intellectual taste of the day. He became a member of the Select Society, established by the younger Allan Ramsay, and is hereafter to be counted as one of the leading intellectual

lights of Edinburgh, whose connection with any strict religious creed was somewhat remote. He became tutor to the sons of Lord Bute; and was soon engaged as one of the warmest champions of Home, whose theatrical essay in "Douglas" was giving scandal to the stricter brethren. We hear of him as one of the little company—composed of Robertson, David Hume, Dr. Carlyle, and Dr. Blair—who took upon themselves the characters of Home's tragedy in a private rehearsal. Adam Ferguson, we read, took the *rôle* of Lady Randolph. The Scottish clergy had indeed made startling advances in their ideas of decorum.

Like many of his brethren who felt that the pulpit was an inadequate scene for the exercise of their talents, Ferguson had his ambition fixed upon a chair in one of the Scottish universities. In 1758 there was a scheme on foot whereby a resignation was to be procured by the payment of a certain sum, and by a little shuffling of the cards, a place was to be found for Ferguson. The transaction did not seem to savour of jobbery so much as it would have been held to do in our own day; and we must be chary of passing too severe a sentence upon it when we find that amongst its ardent supporters is to be numbered Adam Smith. However that may be, the scheme miscarried—apparently over a difference as to the amount to be paid. Ferguson found consolation next year in his appointment to the Chair of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh. It was characteristic of the time that Ferguson had no misgivings in accepting the chair, in spite of utter ignorance of his subject. His audacity gave rise to Hume's friendly sarcasm—that Ferguson had more genius than any of them, as in three months he had learned enough of an obscure science as to be able to

teach it. In 1764 he exchanged this chair for the more congenial one of Moral Philosophy, which he held till 1785.

In 1765 he published his "Essay on the History of Civil Society." He was now sufficiently identified with the somewhat lax school of speculative moralists, upon which the more orthodox began to look askance. Beattie was now preparing for his doubtful championship of the older methods of thought, and on what was apparently a meagre acquaintance with the book, he felt it to be his duty to decry it. "Our Scottish writers are too metaphysical," he writes to Gray apropos of the book; "I wish they would speak more to the heart and less to the understanding. But alas! this is talent which Heaven alone can bestow, whereas the philosophical spirit (as we call it) is merely artificial, and level to the capacity of every man who has much patience, a little learning, and no taste." Gray refuses to accept his friend's verdict on Ferguson's book. "He has not the fault you mention," is Gray's reply; "his application to the heart is frequent and often successful." The dry light of reason was indeed not likely to be the chief concern of such a temperament as that of Ferguson; and it might have been wished that the author of the "Minstrel" had remembered his own maxim, and not rashly strayed, as we shall presently find that he did, into a field for which nature had not equipped him.

The fault of Ferguson was certainly not that he neglected appeals to the heart or to the feelings. He did not, indeed, seek to rouse the ardour of religious fervour. With him the religious motive was a very secondary one. "We must not," he says, "trust to whatever may bear the name of religion or conscience,

or to what may have a temporary vogue in the world, for our direction in the paths of a just and manly virtue." [1] Virtue, he says again, may transmit its lessons "through the channels of ingenuous literature and the fine arts, no less than in the way of formal instruction." But the motives to which he did appeal—the assumed instinct of perfection, the dictates of manliness and courage, the impulse to heroic action—all these were not unfitting engines in an appeal to the feelings of the heart. Whether they would stand the dreary and monotonous strain of the exigencies of daily life, and would form motives sufficient for the ordinary frailty of humanity, may well be doubted. But we cannot deny a certain sympathy to the ardent Celt who then preached a stoicism, based on heroism, to the callous spirit of the eighteenth century, and who enforced its lessons by the wide experience which his adventurous life had brought him. Life was a game, according to the maxim which he is fond of repeating: we must play it like men.

For a man so restless, so whimsical, and so impulsive, no theory of life would have been tolerable which did not suggest heroic action on a stirring scene. He had all the Celtic craving for variety, and his curiosity to learn the ways of men increased by what it fed on. He had abundant opportunities to travel. As tutor to Lord Chesterfield, he again visited France in 1774, and held intercourse with Voltaire. To draw out the great man, he tells us with some humour, "he encouraged every communication, even jokes against Adam and Eve and the rest of the prophets—(such jokes were not over-galling, and such collocation did not seem amiss, to Ferguson)—in order to be considered as

[1] "Principles of Moral and Political Science," ii. p. 320.

one who had no ill humour to the freedom of fancy in others." In 1776 we find him in America as secretary to the Commissioners who had to treat with Washington, and carrying a momentous message to Congress. He returned to throw himself with new zest into his intellectual tasks: and in 1783 he published his "History of the Roman Republic"—a work which under the guise of history is in truth a series of lectures on ethics and politics, with a strong leaven of stoicism. Retiring from his chair in 1785, he prepared for the press his "Principles of Moral and Political Science," which may be taken as the substance of his teaching in the chair. It is a work which few but the curious now find leisure to consult.

But Ferguson is none the less interesting as a typical figure of his time, in spite of the not undeserved neglect of his works. Amongst a galaxy of men—none of the first rank in intellect, but all of more than respectable calibre—he has a place all his own. He achieved it partly by his wide and varied experience of life. But it was aided by his Celtic temperament, which gave a freedom and a verve to his speculation which was lacking to others of his school. Morality was to him essentially a thing of great deeds upon a great stage. The type he sought for was that of Aristotle's great-souled man. The subtleties of free thinking would have vexed his soul as much as the subtleties of doctrine: but he was more than any of them—however little he would have avowed it—the type of a purely pagan morality. His stoicism was a picturesque fiction, indeed, and none confessed more frankly than he that in the affairs of everyday life he was nervous and irritable to the last degree. Such inconsistency need not be ascribed to him as a peculiarity amongst philosophers.

His courage, his vigour, his quick impulse, and his warm affection are none the less worthy of note in an age which is usually deemed to have been one of apathetic formality. No wonder that, as he lingered on in a hale old age to his ninety-third year, he commanded the respect and veneration of a younger generation, and earned the decisive verdict of Scott—"a firm man, if ever there was one." In spite of the deadly illness of fifty years before, he remained hale and hearty to an extreme old age, and lived to pronounce his *nunc dimittis* after the news of Waterloo. He was, we are told, a singular apparition : with long white hair, animated eyes, and cheeks like autumnal apples ; stalking with dignified steps, a long staff held at arm's length ; "his gait and air were noble ; his gesture and his looks full of dignity, and composed fire ;" and with his wrappings of fur and copious greatcoats, he looked like a philosopher from Lapland. Nor did he owe his fiery temperament to the free living common amongst his contemporaries. Considerations of health forced to an ascetic diet ; and his son tells us what a pleasant sight it was to watch Ferguson and another of his philosophical comrades forced to similar diet, "rioting over a boiled turnip." Nor must we forget, in taking leave of a notable and picturesque, although somewhat erratic, personality, that it was in the house of Adam Ferguson, where he gathered all that was distinguished in the Scottish capital, that a memorable literary conjunction was witnessed—when Burns, then in the plenitude of his genius, met, and by an intuitive sympathy singled out for notice, the boy who was to divide with him the devotion of his countrymen—Walter Scott.

The chair of Adam Ferguson was filled in 1785

by Dugald Stewart. By this time the place of the Scottish school of philosophy, both as regards Scotland and beyond its borders, was becoming more and more defined. That it was alien to much that was most deeply rooted in the religious character of an older generation of Scotsmen, there can be no doubt. It is just as little doubtful that beyond the sphere of its influence there remained a large body of intelligent and strenuous, if somewhat narrow, conviction, which would have recoiled in horror from many of its conclusions, and would have suspected its methods, had it ever troubled itself with inquiries into either. The more rigid party in the Church did occasionally question the influence of the philosophical teaching of the day, and when the scandal rose to its worst in the writings of Hume they attempted, without success, to invoke the engine of ecclesiastical discipline. But amongst the reading public, the free discussion of these questions produced but little disturbance. The chief exponents of the current philosophy were careful to avoid polemics as far as possible, and with the thinking public, this procured for them, if not an altogether favourable, at least a lenient construction. The most notable exception to this rule was the publication, in 1770, of Beattie's "Essay on Truth." Beattie had been born in 1735, and, after studying for the Church, had abandoned the intention when he found that his trial discourse, in which he had indulged a too luxuriant fancy, was sarcastically referred to as poetry rather than prose. In 1760 he became a colleague of Reid, as Professor of Philosophy in Aberdeen; and after some not unsuccessful essays in poetry he came before the world in the guise of a defender of the Faith against the

attacks of Hume. The book had an enormous vogue, and procured for its author a renown which, however evanescent, was for the moment astonishing. But it was in England rather than in Scotland that its reception was most flattering. George III. invited him to court, and conferred on him a pension of £200 a year. The University of Oxford bestowed on him their doctor's degree, and archbishops vied with one another in compliments and invitations that he should enter the Church. Johnson and Burke, with that generous leniency of judgment which giants owe to dwarfs, hailed him as the champion of religion, and hushed such misgivings as they may have felt about the value of the book by loud praise of the author's good intentions.

But as a fact the book was but a piece of literary flotsam such as is often cast up by the breaking waves of controversy. As a philosophical disputant Beattie is beneath contempt. Occasionally he scores a good point, but it may almost always be traced to Reid. He makes a sound accusation against the Scottish school, that they were ignorant of the work of the ancient philosophers and blind to their merits; but the accusation is one which he was utterly incapable of pushing home. The book is indeed a commonplace and frothy mixture of popular invective and almost childish argument. Had he possessed the sarcasm of a Butler or a Swift he might have attacked philosophic foibles as they had been attacked in "Hudibras" and in the "Tale of a Tub," with no aid of argument, and with only the keen lance of wit. But, alas, to quote Beattie's own words of Ferguson, "that is a talent which Heaven only can bestow." Only one or two in an age can enter the lists of controversy

with no arms but those of wit. Many more may venture to meet a sophism in argument, and to encounter it with its own weapons; but such an encounter implies skill of fence, quickness of eye, and consummate training. Poor Beattie had none of these. In place of them he brought to the fight only a mass of half-digested arguments, padded out with irrelevant bursts of turgid invective. The English Tories hailed such an ally—from a quarter where he was least to be expected—and forgot in their welcome to take a just measure of their recruit. But in Scotland the book had a much less flattering reception, and when it appeared in all the magnificence of a reprint in quarto, the list of subscribers contains but a sprinkling of his own countrymen amidst an imposing crowd of English names. In truth, the need of such championship was not greatly felt in Scotland. Whether because the Scottish school of philosophers had captivated the taste of their educated countrymen, or because they had faithfully reflected its tendency, it is at least certain that a tolerably convenient pact had been arranged between them. The Scottish Church and the Scottish reading public were not unduly sensitive about the rigidity of doctrinal orthodoxy; and the Scottish philosophers, so long as they kept within certain limits and showed no obtrusive scepticism, were not tolerated only but respected. Hume's "Treatise" was now thirty years old, and the teaching of Reid was a more powerful antidote than the feeble commonplaces of Beattie.

Such was the position of matters when Dugald Stewart became the chief representative of our Scottish school. In a certain sense he may be said to close

the list; and in him we may assume it at once to have culminated, and to have come to the end of the work which was to be performed on the old lines. His was not the most powerful intellect amongst the exponents of the school, nor had he even that measure of originality which belonged to some of his predecessors; but he summed up in himself many of their characteristics, and in the main the inheritance which it had to leave to a later generation was transmitted through his hands.

He was born in 1753. Unlike any of the others, he was nurtured in the air of university thought: he was the son of the Professor of Mathematics, and breathed in his youth the atmosphere of an academic society. After spending some years at his own university, he passed to Glasgow, where he came under the influence which predominated in all his speculations—that of Dr. Reid. From Glasgow he returned at the age of nineteen, to undertake the duties of his father, who was disabled by illness; and a few years later he added to these the duties of deputy for Adam Ferguson, during his mission to the American Colonies as secretary to the Commissioners who were to treat with Washington: undertaking, with that vigorous power of mental exertion which was characteristic of his race, a course of lectures on astronomy. Such an extended range of systematic study might terrify the slacker energies of a later day, and it is to be feared that we cannot apply to ourselves the soothing reflection, that the standard of attainment demanded was less than that which would be expected in these days of greater specialisation. The very comprehensiveness of intellectual interest served as a stimulus, and enabled Stewart to bring to the service of the main

occupation of his maturer years, a wealth of illustration which strict application to a single subject would have rendered impossible.

In 1785, on the resignation of Adam Ferguson, Stewart succeeded to the Moral Philosophy chair, the duties of which he discharged until 1810. His veneration for Ferguson was second only to that which he felt for Reid; but no two men could have been more striking contrasts in character, than the fiery and impulsive Celt who had gained his chief lesson in life in the camp and in action, in travels and in affairs of State, and that calm, self-centred, cautious, and well-balanced inheritor of university traditions who took his place.

It would be impossible to claim for Stewart the fame of an original thinker, or to maintain that he inaugurated any new philosophical era, or even contributed very largely to the development of thought. He was cautious to follow in the footsteps of those amongst his predecessors whose teaching seemed to be most sound, modifying their views only in minor points. Such a system as was common to them all—admirable as an educational instrument—admitted of endless modifications in its discursive review of mental processes, and in its ample exposition of these processes to be detected by observation of human life. Such an analysis of more or less patent phenomena permitted variety not only between different exponents, but between the exposition of the same teacher from day to day. New facts occurred, new observations accumulated, new relations were perceived; one process of analysis suggested another, and new fields of illustration constantly opened themselves to the view.

But if he brought no original impulse to the school, the limits of which were indeed fairly well defined, there was no one who expounded its methods with greater acceptance or success than Stewart. His argument was not always close or accurate; his style was diffuse, and his illustration sometimes lavish in its copiousness. But his range of learning, as learning was esteemed in his day, was wide. He had travelled much, and had mixed on easy and familiar terms with men of every class. He had a fund of smooth eloquence. His character, calm, benevolent, and studiously courteous, fitted him admirably to attain that unquestioned and unquestionable authority which made him potent as an oracle amongst his students, and gave to his professional prelections something of the influence of powerful pulpit ministrations. In his time, and mainly through his influence, although also through the high traditions of his predecessors, the University of Edinburgh became the resort of men of all countries. From England many of those most fitted by birth, station, and ability to influence the coming generation, thronged to the northern university as to a Mecca of learning. In his class-room many who, but a few years before, would have looked upon Scotland as a country sunk in ignorance and poverty, and alien in political ideas, sat side by side with the Scottish youth and imbibed the notions which were to form their principles throughout life. Sydney Smith and Brougham, Palmerston and Lord John Russell, Scott and Hamilton, were all amongst his pupils. At an age when their own minds were most open to such impressions, they caught the enthusiasm which his teaching inspired, and learned to find their intellectual sustenance in a learning

which was Scottish to the backbone. There they imbibed, and from thence they transmitted an admiration for their teacher, and a firm faith in his guidance which could hardly be paralleled unless we go back to the groves of the Athenian Academy.

But Stewart's teaching extended beyond the sphere of mental or moral philosophy, and passed into the range of practical politics. Such an extension always has its dangers. It necessarily bases its political theories upon the same lofty level as its moral aspirations, and assumes for them an authority which is frequently open to question, and which opponents are apt most bitterly to resent. Whatever theories of morality may be devised, there can be little variance as to the practical precepts of virtuous action. But political science admits of no such uniformity of judgment. Its foundation rests in history, and its precepts must vary according to our reading of history and our application of its lessons to the circumstances of our own time. Men will vary infinitely in reading and applying these lessons, and they will sturdily refuse to accept the maxims of their opponents, however cunningly deduced, as an unbending rule of political conduct. The political disquisitions of the Scottish philosophical school were not exempt from such an assumption. The whole bent of their thought had inevitably carried them in the direction of Liberal ideas, of which the Whig party claimed a monopoly. They had shaken themselves free from the narrow and bigoted sectarianism which had kept Scotland in bondage for long. They prided themselves with some justice on having given intellectual freedom to their country. While for the most part they kept on good terms with the Church, their association with her had

been rather that of courteous toleration than of close sympathy. They accepted the latitudinarianism of her dominant party—that of the Moderates—but they had no interest in her ecclesiastical politics, and did not understand the pride of an Establishment that was jealous of dissent and proud of alliance with the State as a means of freedom and independence. In proportion as the Church extended her claims and sought to assert authority over the universities, and drew closer and closer the bond that knit her to the Tory party, the philosophers drew apart from her. Amongst them Dugald Stewart was perhaps the most pronounced in his Whig sympathies, and it did not tend to cordiality that he occasionally assumed a tone of almost arrogant condescension, and took sedulous pains to disown any interest in ecclesiastical affairs. In his earlier days Stewart had gone far with the French encyclopædists, and had cultivated a sympathy with the aims which they set before them. It is true that he disavowed their later tendencies, and did not disguise his detestation of many of the principles which bore fruit in the French Revolution. But his method of combating these was by what he called "an enlightened zeal for political liberty," and what the opposite party decried as a dangerous tampering with revolution. As the tide of political feeling rose higher, and divided Scotland into two angry camps, the philosophical speculations which had hitherto been accorded an easy toleration began to be stigmatised by the Tories as a seed-bed of innovation, dangerous alike to Church and State, and the fervent zeal of the Tories was denounced by the Whigs as an attempt to build up a new tyranny upon the ruins of freedom either in thought or in politics. The calm of the academic

precincts was invaded by the angry voices of political and ecclesiastical strife, and the Scottish school of philosophy, in its narrower and home-bred phrase, was broken up amidst the darkening clouds of an embittered warfare. Henceforward it assumed a new shape, and its older traditions lingered only as a memory. Its firm hold upon the intellectual growth of the nation was gone. The Scottish universities were still to boast names of great weight in philosophical speculation. But they no longer governed the minds and dominated the feelings of a whole generation. They were no longer of exclusively Scottish growth. Their work belongs no longer to the history of Scotland, but to the history of philosophy. Their influence was confined to an academic clique.

The very generation which followed Stewart's tenure of the Moral Philosophy chair showed how surely this change was operating. To his bitter chagrin, and by the weight of party influence, his successor in 1820[1] was not his own nominee, Sir William Hamilton, but John Wilson, better known under the sobriquet of "Christopher North." A few years later Hamilton obtained the Chair of Logic, and for the next generation these two—a strange and ill-assorted couple—represented the philosophical teaching of the university. Both were Oxford men, powerfully influenced by the spirit of that university, and owing comparatively little to their Scottish education. But with this, which in itself distinguished them from their predecessors, all resemblance ends. Wilson was

[1] Stewart ceased to do the active work of professor in 1810, but he continued till 1820 to hold titular office, during the tenure of Brown, who discharged the duties of the chair from 1810 till his death in 1820.

a turbulent personality, with a whimsical strain of romance and poetry, a few stray notions of literary criticism, and an overflowing torrent of animal spirits which he himself and many of his contemporaries accepted as genius. But of any power of concentrated or systematic thought he was absolutely destitute. He might carry on the traditions which made literary criticism one of the subjects of philosophical disquisition, but it was in a method and with aims far different from those of his predecessors. He was open to literary impressions by which they were unstirred, and he caught something of the spirit of a school of poetry which had not arisen in their day; but for philosophical speculation he was incapable either by nature or by training. His compeer Hamilton was a man of far other calibre. To him philosophy enfolded secrets to which the Scottish school resolutely closed their eyes; it pointed out new paths upon which they would not have dared to enter. He attained a position in the history of philosophy of which Scotland might well be proud. But he spoke to a studious and a narrow class, and powerful as his influence was, it never guided the nation's thought, and never attempted to mould her history.

Such, then, during the course of the century, was the progress and the decay of the Scottish school of philosophy. No history of the nation could ignore that school as a potent influence. But it does not belong to history to estimate its place in the region of philosophical thought. Only some of its most distinctive features come within our range. There were, doubtless, limitations in the range of these thinkers, and in certain respects an insufficient equipment for their task. They were ignorant of the achievement

of ancient philosophy, and knew but superficially its chief exponents. Its infinite depth of meaning—its irony, and what we may call its humour, were sealed books to them. Of mediæval philosophy they were equally ignorant, and of its vast results, and grasp of metaphysical conceptions, they could not form the most faint idea. Bacon was to them a veil between the thought of their own day and the more dim and distant past, and beyond that veil they never sought to penetrate, save to ridicule what they deemed to be the vain and useless gropings of ages whose very alphabet of thought was to them nothing but meaningless hieroglyphics. Nor, to come to a much later day, can we claim for any of them any grasp of thought even remotely approaching that of Newton; any such delicate philosophical perception as that of Berkeley; nor even that consummate power which Johnson, in spite of all his impatience of consecutive philosophical argument, wielded with such ample ease, of striking out of a single philosophical maxim its kernel of human interest. The realm of thought which was being opened by their contemporary, Kant, was one into which they had no wish to enter, and where they could have found no foothold. To these deficiencies they added some positive faults. They lacked ease of expression, and to many of them, we must remember, literary English was almost a foreign tongue to be acquired by slow and painful effort. They often used artificial and conventional language; and they sometimes erred against the instinct of humour, and forgot the pitiful contrast between their lofty theories of human perfectibility and the very wretched reality. But for all this it would be mere blindness to decry their merit, to minimise their influence, or to forget

the pride with which Scotland may fairly regard them. Rarely has such a long succession of men been found, who not only shaped the thought of their country with such consistency, but kept its intellectual aims on so high a level of dignity. From no country of such size, in the face of such adverse fortune, and whose rise from the deepest depression had been so recent and so sudden, has there sprung up a distinct and well-defined school with such a vitality of its own, and which can maintain with such justice its claim to be reckoned with wherever human thought and its phases are objects of curiosity and research.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HENRY ERSKINE AND THE YOUNGER WHIGS.

Before entering on the discussion of last chapter, into which we were tempted in order to survey a special field of Scottish intellectual effort, we had traced the progress of political affairs down to the dispute as to Erskine's tenure of the Deanship of the Faculty of Advocates. The assault had ended, as it was bound to end, in his being deposed from the office. The only surprising thing is that he should ever have proposed to continue to represent a profession the vast majority of which held his openly expressed opinions in abhorrence. In the later reminiscences of those who were then entering upon a political struggle, in which they deemed themselves the pioneers of enlightenment, that contest over a professional election is recounted with the epic grandiloquence of an Homeric conflict. But there was really nothing out of the ordinary about it. A few young Whig advocates disliked their Tory elders, and would have been very glad if the personal popularity of Henry Erskine had enabled him to hold a post where he had flouted the opinions of these elders. The design failed; and they found it a good opportunity for denouncing the narrowness, the bigotry, the intoler-

ance of the Tory party. But in truth the incident marks only the determination of the Tory party at last to take active steps to curb what they deemed to be dangerous tendencies on the part of those who disputed their supremacy. Up to this time party spirit had not run very high in Scotland. For the greater part of the century, most Scotsmen, who did not adopt Jacobite views, had professed a general adhesion to the tenets of the Revolution Whigs; but these tenets covered a very sound substratum of practical Toryism. Those who held more advanced views were deemed to be so unimportant that they might be treated with an indulgent toleration — all the more because there was a disposition to treat political difference with equanimity. But the limits of indulgence were reached when the official representative of the most conservative profession in Scotland was found to be an apparent sympathiser with revolutionary tenets. It was a challenge to combat which the Tory party could hardly shirk; and the issue proved their incontestable supremacy. At the same time it gave to their opponents that definite attitude as a political party, which was the first necessary step in their advance. In later days the Whig party were wont to count the deposition of Erskine as the opening of their calendar. Some of them played no very heroic parts in the struggle, and gave votes against Erskine at the bidding of powerful patrons. Nothing makes a man so strong a partisan as to have voted against his party and his conscience, and then to find that it has not paid.

As the century drew to its close, Scotland had changed so completely that it now contained ample material for new political combinations. We have already seen that altered economical conditions were

giving rise to new problems, and that there were disturbing elements in society which occasionally broke out in open revolt. But besides this the whole condition of the nation was greatly changed. The landlord was no longer the unquestioned superior, looking to the attachment and loyal submission of his tenants as his most precious privilege. Instead of that, he held his land too often with the niggard hand and selfish aim of the man who had to depend upon the money value of his domain, and to whom sheep were more profitable tenants than men. The clans were broken up, and the son and grandson of many a man who carried sword and target in the battles of his chief, now used his thews and sinews only as chairman or caddy in the Edinburgh streets. The balance of numbers and of weight was passing from the country to the towns; and even in the towns themselves the older commercial families, who formed an aristocracy of their own, were being thrust aside by a new and energetic body of manufacturers, of lower social position, of rougher manners, and likely to form easier recruits for any party which aimed at sweeping reforms. The population of Scotland had grown from about 1,000,000 at the time of the Union, to about 1,250,000 in 1755, and to about a million and a half in 1790. But it had gravitated towards the towns in a far greater proportion. To the ideas of our own day, indeed, the towns appear small. Only seven had a population which reached five figures—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Paisley, and Greenock. But these towns had grown, in the aggregate, by 100,000 in the forty years preceding 1790—considerably more than their total population in the year of the Union. On the other hand, in many of the

country districts there was a distinct decrease, and the shifting of the population was only one sign of the change in the condition of the nation.

It by no means follows, however, that because great changes were in progress, Scotland was willing to forget her past. On the contrary, the very generation which saw the older types undergoing disintegration, became the most careful to mark them, and the most sedulous to preserve their memory. Traditions which had before been accepted as matters of course became invested with a new dignity. Scottish antiquities, Scottish vernacular literature, the ballads that lived by oral transmission amongst the people—all these became the objects of enthusiasm and of untiring study. Scotsmen saw that characteristic features were being obliterated, and strove to preserve their memory.

It was in Edinburgh above all that the feeling of attachment to older traditions prevailed, and it is there that the history of Scotland was centred during the closing years of last century. There, for part of the year at least, was gathered all that was most characteristic of Scottish life. There the wires of the administration were pulled. There new agricultural schemes were promulgated and discussed. It was the seat of Scottish law, of Scottish ecclesiastical government, of Scottish banking. It was still the resort of such of the Scottish aristocracy as had not yet yielded to the tempting custom of dividing their time between their estates and London. It was through Edinburgh that the stranger chiefly knew Scotland, and he found in it an epitome of almost every Scottish type. Edinburgh was not then, as it soon afterwards became, in the words of Sydney Smith, "a pack of cards without the

honours." It combined within it a strange medley of coarseness and refinement, of sottish living and high thinking, of rough buffoonery and stately manners. Pomp and dignity were to be seen side by side with conditions of life in which the decencies of modern usage were set at defiance. In spite of the growth of the New Town, stately equipages and courtly dresses were still to be seen moving about the fetid alleys of the old city, which were blissfully exempt from any rules of sanitation or even of cleanliness. In many of the social gatherings there was to be found a severe etiquette side by side with arrangements that would have disgraced a village ordinary. The Assembly Room, where the most aristocratic society held its dances—ruled on the most stringent lines of social formality—was situated in one of the ancient wynds. It contained only one room, through the open door of which the smoke of the footmen's flambeaux was wafted in, and soon made the atmosphere dense to suffocation. At a certain period of the evening dancing was suspended for supper to be brought in. When the festivities came to an apparent end, the ladies were conducted to their chairs in the glare of smoking torches, and were attended to their homes each by her cavalier, with hat in one hand and drawn sword in the other. But the festivities did not really end there. When the picturesque train had been escorted through the narrow lanes and under the foul-smelling archways, the same cavaliers returned to the supper-room and held it a point of honour to bring in the daylight by drinking to the health of their mistresses—"saving the ladies," as it was called—until the larger part of the company lay helplessly drunk. Yet these same gentlemen were nice in maintaining the punctilios of honour,

careful as to all the rigidities of conventional etiquette, and would have been horrified had they been charged with a brutality that would not have been amiss in a company of Covent Garden porters.

The amusements were not all of the baser kind. Music was enthusiastically cultivated, and in a grimy room in the squalid purlieus of the Cowgate—St. Cecilia's Hall, which Cockburn could recall in later days, with perhaps some partiality of memory, as "the most beautiful concert-room he had ever seen"—performances of no mean pretension were given. The theatre was now largely patronised, and Mrs. Siddons had no more enthusiastic audiences than those of Edinburgh.

There were no doubt those who denounced the more frivolous pursuits of Edinburgh society — lamented the loss of pristine rigidity—and foretold still further laxity as rapidly approaching. But even they neither preached nor practised any severe asceticism. They did not fall short of their latitudinarian brethren in the enjoyment of good living. Their suppers were as social, their symposia as long and as copious as those of the Moderates. The severer aspects of religion were softened down, and in the descriptive phrase of one who could recall these days there was even amongst the High-flyers a large measure of "pious pleasantness" that made them not less acceptable as members of a genial and self-indulgent society.

Such is one aspect of Scottish society about the close of the eighteenth century. Undue laxity was not the feature which most struck some observers. A picture drawn by a pencil touched with sarcasm, and in which the tincture of sympathy has not the faintest trace, sometimes helps us to realise characteristic traits.

Eminent as the Scottish capital not unjustly claimed to be—in intellect, in fashion, and as the centre of a bright and attractive social life—it had another aspect that might strike the casual English traveller, and if we watch it with his eyes, it helps us to picture it with a good deal more of vivid reality. In the year 1811, two young English travellers visited Edinburgh: and the impression it made upon them is painted for us in a few pages of deft and humorous description by the one of the pair who has left a biography[1] of his illustrious companion, that is unique in its wayward humour, and in its odd blending of sarcasm and admiration—so intermixed that we can hardly tell where one ends and the other begins. Shelley and Hogg took up their residence in Edinburgh for some weeks in that year; and no spirits ever existed upon which its quaint combination of all the decencies with all the sordidness of life; of picturesque beauty with mean and repulsive corners; of gay society with sombre formality—could strike with more whimsical effect. Its inns were dirty and slatternly, but the fare was good; its lodgings capacious but melancholy; and above all a dominant gloom which respectability thought it decent to cultivate, and which clung with most tenacity about the strict religious observance which it united with a generous measure of conviviality, seemed to pervade the air. The travellers found a well-developed sense of national superiority—in Scottish phrase, "a good conceit of themselves"—to be flourishing in the modern Athens. According to its inhabitants its Old Town could not be matched for solemn and historic interest, nor its New Town for spacious and grandiose magnificence. To learn its

[1] Hogg's "Life of Shelley."

usages and to see its sights was in itself an education for the ignorant Saxon. In its own estimation it stood unrivalled for its wealth of erudition, and for the profoundness of its philosophical speculation. Its lower classes were uncouth in appearance and unintelligible in language; but underneath the unpromising outside, they compelled themselves to believe that there lay mines of indigenous philosophy. Above all, the stolid solemnity of the crowds that "drew nigh unto the kirk" on the Sunday, and moved in one unbroken mass of melancholy, but complacent, dejection to their places of worship, struck the young poet with a sense of almost agonised bewilderment, and his friend with a humorous ludicrousness that his pages have preserved to us with vivid liveliness. It was Shelley's lot to be rebuked for profaning the Sabbath solemnity by laughter in the street—which almost brought him within the terrors of the law; and with daring curiosity he penetrated the churches only to be brought to the verge of hysterical frenzy by the dire denunciations which struck upon his sensitive ear. He even witnessed a solemn catechising of "the domestics and the children," which roused him to a shriek of laughter, only good luck enabling him to escape the dire penalties of ecclesiastical wrath. The whole picture is surpassingly humorous. It is strange to recall the wayward and sensitive poet moving in a scene peopled by figures that to him were as distant as the denizens of another world. The outward strangeness baffled and perplexed him; the solemn staidness of the citizens moved the sarcastic vein of his friend; but to both the real spirit of their Scottish fellow-subjects was hidden beneath a veil as impenetrable as any Cimmerian fog. The life of the two nations was slowly

blending; but to casual travellers like these, Scottish character was still shut off from their knowledge by a thick and impassable barrier, which poetic imagination could not pierce, and whose solid mass only blunted the edge of the darts which sarcasm hurled against it. Travellers like Hogg and Shelley knew no more of the life of Scotland, and no more appreciated its real meaning, than do the visitors to a waxwork understand the thoughts and feelings of those whom the figures represent. They could not distinguish convention from reality, habit from conviction, what was formal from what was bred in the bone.

Scottish society was a blend so curious that it would have taken wiser heads than those of this young couple to understand its strange and mingled features. But this delicately poised situation, in which the old and the new were nicely balanced, could scarcely remain long unchanged. The time was coming when old memories were to be assailed by intrusive innovations. One by one, the old haunts were deserted, the old figures vanished, the old customs were passing away. The levelling hand of modern usage was ruthlessly pushing aside the quainter forms of the older society and substituting for them more and more of its own dreary monotony. The aristocracy began to drift away from Edinburgh. The society of the Scottish capital became more exclusively professional, and suffered by the change. Even the professional element was diminishing in range, and there were signs that the literary supremacy of Edinburgh might pass away. Its little coteries of philosophers and *literati* were no longer what they had been a few years before. The purely intellectual web was wearing perilously thin, and had to be replaced

by something a little more stirring to the blood and more suggestive to the imagination. Life was becoming less interesting, and a solace was not to be found in the lucubrations of philosophy. Men craved instinctively for some of the inspiration of romance to relieve the dismal struggle between picturesque but decaying memories and the prosaic monotony of modern life.

Such changes as those which we have noticed, even had there been no other cause for division, must inevitably have produced different effects on the men who came under their influence, according to their temperaments. Some must have welcomed them; others must have clung regretfully to the relics of the past. Some must have found in them a much-needed emancipation from usages and conventions that were irksome and unmeaning. Others must have hated their intrusion into the quiet and even tenor of a genial and comfortable society. But all such differences were soon to be sharply accentuated by schisms that had deeper causes than individual temperament. It was these that became active and virulent in the last decade of the old century, and the opening years of the new one.

It is curious that the name to which the newer party looked back as their leading representative, and about which the first keen party fight was fought, was that of one who, by birth, tradition, temperament, and taste, belonged far more to the old than to the new *régime*. Henry Erskine was a scion of one of the oldest families of the Scottish aristocracy. He was not without pride in his descent, although it was too genial to excite resentment, and tempered by too much taste to be ridiculous. His earlier days had been spent in the

gay scenes which crowded the old town when it was still the resort of the Scottish aristocracy, and he had every gift of nature to make him an ornament of such a society. Pre-eminently handsome, he had a grace of manner that made him welcome in every circle, and the influence of his wit and *bonhomie* was irresistible. He entered into all the genial life of that gay society, but was singularly free from its coarser and more licentious characteristics. Without being a student, he had a retentive memory and scholarship much above the level of that usual even in the professional circles of Scotland. Clinging fondly to her traditions, and with no disdain for her provincialisms, he was yet qualified by every grace and accomplishment to shine in far wider circles. With friend and foe alike his easy geniality and his light and ready wit made him a choice companion, and won him lifelong friends even amongst those most sharply divided from him in political opinion. Even the victims of his sarcasm forgave one in whom good-humour was always uppermost, and in whose presence dulness seemed out of place. Some of his gifts he shared with his elder brother, the Earl of Buchan, and with the younger, who, after a brief service in the navy and afterwards in the army, suddenly started to the foremost place at the English Bar, and rising to the Woolsack, left behind him a memory of forensic eloquence that has perhaps never been equalled in the legal annals of England. But he was without the consuming conceit and absurdity, which sometimes approached insanity, in the elder brother, and he had none of that gloom and waywardness that obscured the splendid talents of the younger. For more than half a century Lord Buchan was a standing jest to the citizens of Edinburgh. In

his own mind he was the chief prop of Scottish patriotism, the originator of all that was most notable in the products of genius or the discoveries of science in his day. He patronised Washington—whom he honoured by the title of cousin—lectured the royal family, gave his *imprimatur* to the works of genius, and in his old age supplied the materials for a wondrous piece of tragi-comedy by forcing himself into what seemed likely to be the death-chamber of Scott, in order to explain the arrangements for the funeral, which were to be carried out under his august patronage. He began as the adherent of Revolutionary principles, and ended by kicking the *Edinburgh Review* from his door, and in either case he deemed that his decision was conclusive of the matter. In grace of person and dignity of manner, with all this absurdity, he rivalled his brother Henry; and even his lofty assumption of patronage never broke the fraternal affection that bound the brothers to one another, and never provoked the dexterous wit that played so lightly about others. To those who knew them, it seemed strange that one family should produce so much wit and so much absurdity; but to Lord Buchan the only wonder was that one house should bring forth such a galaxy of talent. It was the Duchess of Gordon who answered his boasting of the family talents by remarking that she presumed the wit came by the mother, and was settled on the younger branches.

In the history of Scotland, save as an instance of odd eccentricity nearly akin to madness, Lord Buchan is a negligible quantity. But it was altogether different with Henry Erskine. For a quarter of a century he stood forth as the leader of the party opposed to Dundas, and the two figures towered easily above all

others. No two men could have been more sharply contrasted. Dundas was without literature, scholarship, or the lighter accomplishments. Such eloquence as he possessed was based on force and common-sense, and in no wise upon grace or elegance. If he had genius, it was for action, and his strength lay in consummate judgment, in dexterity in the management of men, and in restless and untiring industry. Erskine gave to his profession only what he could spare from music and poetry and genial interest in all the varied affairs of men. He was a force at the Bar, not from the extent of his legal knowledge, and not from the grasp of his intellect, but from the wit and grace which coloured all he did. He contrasted strangely with the prominent figures of the Parliament House. Beside the coarse and uncouth, but massive personality of Braxfield, the quaint oddities of Monboddo, the farcical absurdity by which Eskgrove furnished endless mirth to the mimics of the Bar, Erskine seemed like a denizen of another world. He introduced within the gloomy portals of the Parliament House a grace of diction, altogether free from pedantry, to which its walls had never before rung. He formed a new fashion and began a new school of forensic eloquence, and that, combined with his irresistible personal fascination, made his name, and, long after, his memory, things to conjure with. It was the combination of high birth, of strong attachment to fashions which were waning, of graceful and genial social gifts, with opinions of a democratic and revolutionary caste, that made of him a personality so attractive. In a society that was assuming more and more of a narrow professional colouring, he stood out as a representative of aristocratic elegance, varied accomplishments, and principles that were

deemed dangerous and anarchical. Such a figure has an irresistible attraction. He was a link with an older society, and made an admirable figurehead for a political party that stood in need of just such a leader to give them weight and influence.

But with all this Erskine's political career was astonishingly ineffective. His interest in the popular movements of the day was generous enough, but was combined largely with something of the graceful condescension of one who was an aristocrat by birth and taste. His part in ecclesiastical affairs was not that of the earnest Presbyterian, who was drawn towards the tenets of an older and more rigid school. It was necessary for him to become the ally of the High-flyers, but there was little of real community of sentiment between him and them. So far as the religious opinions of his family went, they partook of the strain of religious thought inculcated by Whitfield (whose teaching never proved very congenial to Scotsmen), and by the sect which followed the lead of Lady Huntingdon. He himself, by the accident of his being brought up apart from the rest of his family, never came directly under this influence; and he was so strongly inclined to the Episcopalian form, that at one time he seems seriously to have contemplated taking orders in the English Church. Political exigencies, perhaps, as much as anything else, made him in later life a prominent champion in the Assembly of the party opposed to the Moderates, but it may be doubted whether he had anything more than a formal and superficial sympathy with his ecclesiastical associates. As a lawyer, with all his ready wit and quick intellect, and with all the sway which his graceful eloquence acquired for him on a scene where

dull and ponderous pedantry had long been the prevailing characteristic, he never gained the reputation or the weight which sound legal learning would have brought to him. In politics he was rather prized as the leader of a section whose social influence was small, and whose position was vastly raised by the alliance of a man in the first ranks of the Scottish aristocracy, than obeyed as one whose administrative capacity fitted him to shape the counsels of a party in the State. The period when he first held office was unfortunate. He became Lord Advocate for a few months in 1782, under the ill-omened Coalition Government of Fox and North, and he then became identified with Fox's India Bill, which, had it passed, would have affected most adversely the hopes of aspiring Scotsmen of attaining power and influence and wealth in the East. When that Government fell and was replaced by Pitt, Erskine was so far mistaken in his political forecast as to think that Pitt's power was only a laughable farce which must come to condign failure before many weeks were over. The results of the election of 1784 proved how lamentably he and his party had been mistaken, and he found himself one of a hopeless minority with no prospect of recovering power for many a day. No career was thenceforth possible to him but one of resistance, not only to the dominant political party, but to all the prevailing current of opinion in society and at the Bar. In a certain sense this gave him a unique position. He was the friend and intimate of all who formed the most select of Scottish society, but he was in sympathy with those who stood outside its pale. To his advocacy was naturally intrusted any cause which seemed hopeless, and which could be maintained only by one who had no political future to be wrecked, and

whose rank enabled him to identify himself without danger with unpromising clients. His generosity made him the ready patron of the poor litigant, and his name was hailed as that of the friend of the weak; but he had also to plead the cause of those who had nothing to commend them save that they had incurred the terrors of the law, and whose interests were to be served rather by bold and impassioned appeals than by legal argument. He became the leader of forlorn hopes, the man whose popularity and wit enabled him to defy the powers arrayed on the side of the law with an ease and a nonchalance which would have been impossible to a man of less assured social eminence.

In this position he was greatly aided by his election to that office of Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, his deposition from which has already been discussed. No one doubted his chivalry or his honour; no one could accuse him of fighting only that he might force his way against prescriptive privilege. In all the endless byplay of a stirring and active society he took a leading part. When Mrs. Siddons came to thrill Edinburgh audiences, her chief patron was Henry Erskine. His protection encouraged and stimulated the genius of Burns, and his personal charm drew the poet into a warm admiration and a sense of grateful friendship, and made his wayward and not very definite political opinions assume the guise of devoted adherence to the party led by Erskine. If the thick crust of conventional Toryism was to be broken, there seemed no champion whose spear was so likely to shatter it as Harry Erskine.

At times he had strange clients One of the most curious of these—a figure strangely illustrating one phase of Edinburgh life—was Deacon Brodie. He

was a young citizen belonging to a respectable commercial family. By specious manners and unfailing audacity he had acquired considerable influence, and as a member of the close corporation had dexterously managed to gain political influence, which he employed on the side of the Whig candidate, Sir Thomas Dundas. But, in spite of all this, strange stories were told of his life. Whispers were heard that his means of livelihood were doubtful and that he was in close alliance with criminals. His morals were licentious and he was known to be an inveterate gambler; but it was further asserted that he had been all but detected when himself carrying on the business of a burglar. At length he was concerned in an organised robbery of the Custom House, and the treachery of some of his confederates brought him within the grasp of the law. His only reliance was in Henry Erskine, and with that "most game cock of the lot," as he called him in his sporting parlance, he took his trial with some confidence. The cause was hopeless; the evidence was overwhelming; a well-concocted *alibi* broke down; and Erskine had to fight only by dexterous appeals to the pity and the fears of the jury. Even his eloquence was of no avail, but the scoundrel did not lose hope, and he perhaps thought he might place reliance on the political party whose cause he had favoured. Even when he was condemned, he hoped that a trick might rob the scaffold of its terrors for him; and he jested with his fellow-councillors to the last, and took leave of some of them with the words, "Fare ye well, Baillies; ye needna' be surprised if ye see me among you yet to tak' my share o' the Dead Chack"—as the collation which followed an execution was then called. But the gallows did its work securely, and the memory of

the honest Deacon remained only to tell us something of the strange ingredients that went to make up the civic life of the Scottish metropolis a century ago.

As the reforming party began to develop their opinions, and found them met by the ever-increasing fear of change which the French Revolution was spreading amongst the dominant class, it was only natural that the leading part played by Erskine should become more and more prominent. But here also we find that he somehow failed to assert his authority. So far as Burgh Reform was concerned he was at one with his followers, but he refused absolutely to adopt the scheme of Parliamentary Reform, and refrained from joining the Society of the Friends of the People on this ground. His brother Thomas went farther in this direction; but Henry was sufficiently in sympathy with the dominant feeling of his own class to think that the moment was ill-chosen for urging the wider movement of Parliamentary Reform, and he lost much of his weight in the inner counsels of his party from his scruples.

When the more stringent Acts against sedition, however, were being pressed, he put himself in the forefront of the struggle; and it was by attending and taking a leading part in a meeting to denounce them that he aroused the opposition of the Faculty of Advocates, which led to his loss of the place of Dean in 1796. By this time the antagonism of the two parties was fully marked. The war, added to the Revolution, had joined patriotic fervour to the fear of anarchy. The nation was stirred by military ardour. The Volunteer force was organised, and all classes of citizens crowded into the ranks. To have refrained would have been to court the reputation of a Jacobin

and the disgrace of cowardice. Both parties joined in the prevailing occupation of military drill by which Edinburgh seemed for a time to be turned into a military camp ; but while the one side found the occupation sympathetic and rejoiced in the mimicry of war, the other was compelled to go through the manual exercises with reluctant hearts, and consoled themselves by secret gibes against their more enthusiastic comrades, whose hearts were stirred, as well as their political principles advanced, by the prevailing fervour.

But a new type of political partisan was now quickly rising, which was based on other ideas and had far other sympathies than those of Erskine. A younger generation was coming up, of very different fashion from those whose memories carried them back to the days when Edinburgh society, with all its quaint and piquant ways, was gathered in the wynds about the High Street, and clung to old traditions, old usages, and a dialect that marked them as folk apart. The younger generation had more than political ideas to stir their energies. They were young, they were poor, they were ambitious ; they thought not meanly of their own abilities, and they not unnaturally wished to storm the strongholds of hidebound custom and old-fashioned manners. To them these old-fashioned ways savoured of a world which was not disposed to admit their claims, and which treated their pretensions with disdain. In the older ways there was not a little which was absurd, and which formed an easy butt for smart ridicule. In the days gone by it was impious to sharpen the shafts of ridicule against the dignitaries of the day ; their oddities and eccentricities were accepted as part of the established order of things. The younger

spirits pined for something more lively, but they submitted to this drudgery, and solaced themselves with dreams of romance. Scott has painted such a youth for us in the Allan Fairford of "Redgauntlet," where not a little of autobiography is woven with the character. But the new generation had no such dutiful submission as Fairford practised, and perhaps they had not the resources of consolation which Fairford's romance supplied. They had to make their way, and political partisanship of a more or less pronounced type seemed a good way of making it. They were resolved to break the bonds, and in their reminiscences of the early struggle they perhaps ascribed to themselves a little too much of political enthusiasm, and too small a dose of personal ambition. They pictured to themselves, in these reminiscences, a Scotland groaning under a galling tyranny, pining to be free, and led to a noble resistance to the yoke under a gallant band of young men, who were ready to imperil their future welfare, perhaps even their freedom, in the struggle. They could hardly be expected to see themselves only as a band of ambitious youths, galled by the formalism of their elders, and determined to push their way through the last remnants of a fast declining fashion. On the whole, Scotland was profoundly contented. A few enthusiastics brought themselves within the meshes of the law. A small band of Edinburgh advocates coalesced into an active, brisk, and self-confident partisanship; but the mass of Scotsmen were quite content to go on in the old ways. They heard of the excesses of Revolutionary fury with undisguised horror, and regarded anything which seemed to partake of such ideas with impatience and contempt. When war

was added to anarchy, they readily entered into the enthusiasm for the national defence, and found a ready vent for their patriotic fervour in surrounding themselves with the pomp and majesty of something that looked like military discipline. In this party none was more pronounced than Walter Scott, who threw himself with unbounded ardour into the Volunteer movement, and made that movement a close ally of the Tory party. That party was no servile tool of bigotry and intolerance. Its motive power was national patriotism. It was not exempt from errors, and amongst these, perhaps, the chief was that it treated the young Whig party a little too seriously. That party certainly did so itself.

The leading spirits of this little group were all young men. Erskine was their titular head, their hero, and their ornament. But they belonged themselves to another type. Amongst them were Francis Jeffrey, Henry Brougham, Sydney Smith, and Francis Horner. It would be absurd to deny their conspicuous talents and praiseworthy enterprise; but they certainly had the defects of their qualities. Jeffrey was a man of extraordinary sprightliness and untiring zeal. He had keen literary interests, and, within a very limited range, much acuteness of critical insight. He saw very clearly what was assailable in the existing state of things, although his political ideas were rather those of the versatile lawyer than of a statesman, and were, as those of the lawyer are apt to be, confined in their range. To him and to his friends, the old ways of Edinburgh were, at best, amusing, but more often irksome and distasteful. He would gladly have broken down the distinctive marks of Scottish nationality. After a course at

Glasgow University, he studied as an undergraduate at Oxford; and although the spirit and tone of the English university was profoundly distasteful to him, his antipathy did not prevent his returning to Edinburgh with a grotesque imitation of the Southern speech. As was said of him by Lord Holland, "he lost his broad Scotch and only gained the narrow English." In his later years he cherished a deep and abiding love of his country, but it was the love of long custom and of an affectionate nature for the scene of his early friendships—not the romantic love of the poet or the passionate ardour of the enthusiast. We are bound to admit his deftness and his versatility; no one could deny his political sincerity; it would be rash even to belittle his literary gifts. But to him the wider range of imagination was a closed region. As a lawyer he made no claim to professional erudition. Even as a forensic orator he never attempted to appeal to the feelings, or to rise to the highest flights. But he poured forth arguments with a rapidity and a versatility that at once astonished, amused, and flattered his hearers, and made him eminently successful in appealing to the not very high standard of the juryman's intelligence. So it was in literature. His estimates of men and books were quick, confident, and lucidly expressed, but singularly narrow in range. His political views were definite and practical, but of wide or far-reaching political ideas he had absolutely no conception. Nor could it be said that the little clique of which he was perhaps the moving spirit contained any member who can claim a place in the foremost rank of any line of life. The boisterous force and ill-balanced energy of Brougham disturbed the serenity of the

Court of Session for a few years before he carried them to a larger scene, where they failed to win for him the permanent respect of his countrymen. The sprightly wit of Sydney Smith found a short and not very congenial field in Edinburgh. The plodding assiduity and eminent respectability of Horner enabled him to carry away from Edinburgh a well-earned esteem, although even his friends were obliged to admit that he owed nothing to talent or genius, and we are painfully struck by the truth of Scott's passing jibe, which found in Horner's solemn earnestness a certain reminiscence of Obadiah's bull. All these last speedily forsook the scene where they never found themselves at home, and part of their weakness was that they never understood either the humorous or the romantic side of the phase of life that was passing away, and at which they tilted with quite unnecessary energy. Their work was full of limitations. It was useful in its kind; attractive by its very confidence and succinctness; decaying and neglected by a later generation, because it was without the saving salt of humour and without the living breath of imagination.

Such was the little knot of young men—not all Scotsmen, not all remaining in Scotland, not, as a rule, very closely attached to Scottish nationality, but yet for a few years exercising considerable influence over her destinies. Personal circumstances to a large extent accounted for their attitude, and circumstances also, rather than deep conviction, developed their political ideals. These were not indeed as definite as they afterwards fancied them to be. In the supreme interest of the war, schemes of political reform were not very strongly pressed. Burgh Reform had indeed

its adherents, but they were not very active in the cause. Parliamentary Reform was receding into the distance, and failed to command the support of any considerable party. Fear of anarchy and impatience and contempt of political theories, much more than any deliberate preference for tyranny and oppression, made men ready to support repressive measures against all that savoured of sedition, and intolerant of those who excused or palliated it—as the young Whig party were suspected of doing. But more than all, the patriotic ardour was strong, and the Whigs were guilty of the fatal error of displaying a lack of sympathy with that ardour. It was this and the scant sympathy they showed for what was distinctive in Scottish tradition that weakened their influence and made it that of an active, self-confident, and pushing clique rather than that of a weighty political party. Between the members of the party there was no very close cohesion. Erskine was their ostensible leader, whose name they revered and whose character reflected honour on them, but he did not guide their counsels. The rasping vanity and bitter virulence of Lauderdale made him little fitted to acquire influence amongst a group of young men who trusted their own wit and did not spare his foibles. Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto, was being quickly estranged from the whole party, and followed the guidance of Burke rather than of Fox. Even amongst themselves the little group did not always see eye to eye, and were ready to accuse one another of a flippancy and pertness from which none of them was wholly exempt.

On the other side was the party which, belonging equally to the new rather than to the old generation, yet clung to the old political ideas from temperament

and impulse rather than from any bigoted dislike to reform. They reverenced the name of Dundas, and were grateful for the honour he had brought to their country. Pitt, as the champion who had fought against long odds, was to them a chosen hero. Their feelings were racy of the soil, and they were unwilling to bate anything of Scottish nationality or to lose her distinctive character by modernising tendencies. Their patriotism was without bounds, and into the pomp and display of military preparations they entered with a boyish enthusiasm that fanned the flames of their political zeal. It was no wonder that they were impatient and intolerant of a young and arrogant clique that flouted Scottish prejudices, decried loyalty, and whose views of the war were strongly coloured by their conviction of England's waning power and distrust of the rectitude of her cause. We need hardly wonder that it was this party rather than the other which attracted to itself the strong common-sense no less than the enthusiastic genius of Scott. He was the friend and companion of many on the other side, but political animosities broke and weakened many of these bonds; and amongst those friends, whose names have passed like chaff upon the wind compared with his enduring fame, there gradually grew up a fashion of decrying his Toryism as an intellectual weakness, as an error to be condoned rather than as an essential part of his character. Nothing is more amusing than to watch their comparative estimate of themselves and him, and to find them placing Scott and Jeffrey side by side—not wholly to the disadvantage of the latter—as ornaments of the Scottish capital.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the Tory party in Scotland had not an aspect less pleasing

than that which it presented to Scott's imagination and patriotism. A large proportion of that party was hide-bound with prejudice, narrow, jealous, and selfish in their aims, and defending privilege only because privilege belonged to their class and faction. There can be no doubt that much of the administration—the municipal administration much more than that of the central authority—was at once oppressive and corrupt. It would be wrong to say that there was any conscious tyranny or any deliberate cruelty. But society was in danger, and the dominant class had neither the humour nor the leisure to weigh individual rights very narrowly. There was something of the rough-and-ready discipline of the quarter-deck about the manner of preserving the peace. Men will always forgive a good deal of this sort of hectoring on an emergency if those who hector are honest, able, and clear-sighted; but if they are selfish, purblind, and narrow, if for the brisk confidence of command they substitute the intrigue and wire-pulling of a corrupt and selfish clique, they are only too likely to work up any irritation which exists into chronic and deep-rooted discontent. The economical conditions of Scotland were undergoing a rapid transformation. New classes were asserting themselves. It was hopeless to suppose that the conditions of labour recognised by the existing law could adapt themselves to the state of things created by growing commerce and manufactures. The restrictions upon land tenure were galling and antiquated, and hardly capable of defence. Above all, local administration was hopelessly rotten, and each year that it continued was adding to the permanent evils that it wrought.

We have seen how both Pitt and Dundas had, in their younger days, been ready to welcome Reform.

How such plans had been broken and such hopes dispelled in England is an episode in the larger history of the Empire. But it is certainly to be regretted that the abandonment of Reform for England carried with it the same result for Scotland. There the anomalies were even more glaring and absurd—at any rate, they were more matters of common knowledge. It would have been a bold—perhaps almost a reckless—course for Dundas to have continued to embrace within the tenets of the Tory party a fixed aim of Reform, and to have based the principles of the party upon the hope of a realisation of that Reform as soon as foreign troubles were settled and as soon as the dangers of sedition and anarchy were dispelled. The influence of the Crown, the dead weight of the English Tories, would probably have made such a scheme impossible. But this we may safely say, that it would have deserved success, and that in all probability it would have given a different aspect to the fortunes of the Tory party in Scotland for the whole of the next century. Nor would there have been, in such a scheme, anything either inconsistent with the traditions which had been inspired by the most clear-sighted amongst the Tory leaders of the past, and with the principles of Dundas himself, or alien to the sympathies of the best section of the Tory party at the moment. The ideals of Swift and Bolingbroke had shown how Tory principles could be identified with the advocacy of popular rights, with the redress of anomalies, with a broadening of the basis upon which loyalty rested. A later day was to revive these ideals. At one time it seemed as if Pitt and Dundas might have anticipated that later day. Had they been able to do so, the history

of Scotland since their day might have been very different, and her political position might have been reversed. But the dead weight of the less intelligent section of their party was too heavy for them. Fate made them the leaders of a Toryism which had its generous, its romantic, and its patriotic side, but which was dominated by the hard and dull resistance to all change which was the natural instinct of a narrow, a selfish, and a privileged class.

The error is one which is chiefly to be traced in its results, and we need not blame too severely those who failed to grasp at the moment the possibilities of the situation. Had they boldly pushed schemes of Reform at a moment of national danger, they would probably have encountered insuperable difficulties, would certainly have alienated many of their own party, and might have given to their opponents the chance of bringing a charge of unscrupulous and reckless truckling to the forces of anarchy. The Whigs of that day were not very bold. They dreaded anarchy, partly because it might discredit themselves, still more because it indirectly helped the Tories; and they would not have been unwilling to denounce any wide-reaching scheme of Reform as a concession to anarchical tendencies. However that might be, we may regret the failure of the Tory leaders to embrace a bold plan of campaign, nor are there wanting indications in contemporary evidence that such a plan might have been successful. Again and again we find Scott asserting that the Radicalism of 1793 was a safer and less disorderly element than the Radicalism of 1816.[1] "Had the party," says Cockburn, "with the absolute command of Parlia-

[1] See Lockhart's "Life," vi. 119, 140.

ment, taken the gradual reformation of their evils into their own hands, they might have altered and strengthened the foundation of their power."[1] Obstinate and bigoted resistance to change was for the moment a safe—perhaps the only easy—course, but it was a short-sighted one, and year by year its inadequacy became more clearly recognised.

Such as they were, however, the two political parties now became more clearly divided into hostile camps. They had each their own rallying-points. For the Tories, the annual celebration of the King's birthday on the 4th of June came to be the moment for the revival of loyalty and for confirming the dread and hatred of Revolutionary ideas. On the other hand, the birthday of Fox was made to serve as the annual renewal of Reforming faith.

In 1802 came the first vigorous and decided effort of the younger Whig party in the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review*. It showed an energy, an intellectual alertness, a power of initiative, that compel our admiration. It came to replace a host of periodicals carried on after a dull and plodding method. It was written with a force, a vivacity, and a liveliness that marked a new advance in journalistic—that is to say, in conjoint—literary effort. Its very name acquired for the Northern capital an influence far beyond her own immediate circle. But it is easy to exaggerate its importance. One of those who belonged to the little clique that found no words too strong to describe their own achievements, speaks of the new *Review* as "a pillar of fire"[2] which was, forsooth, to guide a nation wandering through the desert in the darkness of the night. When we look back from the safer perspec-

[1] See Cockburn's "Memorials," p. 279. [2] Cockburn.

tive of a century, the phrase is grotesque enough in its exaggeration. So far from guiding the nation's march, these young men were indeed following footsteps that were very freshly printed, and had very little distinctness of idea as to the direction of their course. The sceptical philosophy which had established itself in Scotland during the century just closing, had left a taste for a sort of easy dialectic and a habit of somewhat crude rationalising. This developed very easily into that very tempting, but cramping, pursuit, smart critical disquisition, which found its own self-complacency gratified by summoning before its judgment-seat the customs, the ideas, even the achievements of the past, and passing upon them a ready and unhesitating condemnation, according to a criterion which it applied without any qualms of modesty or of doubt. The *Edinburgh Review* did not make itself so much the organ of a political party, as the medium of a phase of thought on which that party throve. Nothing could have been more alien to the deeper instincts of the national feeling. But none the less these dapper critics, wrapt in the conviction of their own infallibility, found a congenial soil in Scotland as it then was. They were the natural outcome of the facile latitudinarianism that had masqueraded as free-thought for a generation past. They dreaded nothing so much as being thought provincial, and so they forgot to be national. They were shocked to find themselves charged with irreligion; but there can be no reasonable doubt that their whole attitude was one, not of scoffing at, but of ignoring, religion. It was not religion only, but that wide range of feelings—even of tastes and predilections—which lie close to its domain, that found but scant recognition from this

little clique. They had their petty code, their peremptory canons of criticism, as shallow as they were definite, and in the application of that code and these canons they were narrow and mechanical. Phases of thought which were alien to their own; depths of speculation which they could not fathom; flights of imagination which were beyond their ken—above all, a type of poetical creation which they never learned to appreciate—all these were treated with a smart and attractive sarcasm, and made the butt of perfectly self-satisfied ridicule, which mistook itself for wit. This pleased a wide class in a generation which was active-minded, alert, and fairly educated, but where profound intellectual power and wide scholarship were rare. Nothing flattered the conceit of such a class so much as the notion that they were in possession of a touchstone that made them infallible judges of all literary merit, and of all speculative theories. Nothing inspired that infallibility with more sprightly confidence than to put into its hands the weapons of sarcasm and ridicule. Nothing made its self-complacency more impenetrable than just that fair modicum of education and of reading, widely diffused, but never learning to compare itself with really profound or extensive scholarship. This luscious and toothsome diet was just what the *Edinburgh Review* set before its readers; the appetite they brought themselves; and for a time, with a certain class of Scottish society, and with a certain type of minds beyond her borders, the *Review* and its promoters were much in vogue.

Its distinctly partisan phase—so far as politics were concerned—rather developed out of the taste to which it pandered and out of the ideas upon which it worked, than was the prime motive with which it started. In

its early days it ran a tilt against no principles of the Tory party. It was only as it grew older that it began deliberately to press the views for which the Whigs were fighting. It was by an article on the Spanish campaign, which seemed to preach the hopelessness, if it did not even ridicule the folly, of national resistance to foreign despotism,[1] that the *Review* first assumed for itself a pronounced party bias, and alienated the sympathies of many who had before been amused by its sprightliness if occasionally irritated by its pertness and its flippancy. But the new line now adopted, which ran counter to the patriotic ardour, then in the full impulse of its force, did more than alienate the Tories. It gave pause to many even amongst the Whigs. If Scott's Toryism made him instantly cease his own contributions, and even withdraw his name from the list of subscribers to the *Review*, we must not forget that it was Lord Buchan, the Whig head of the family to which Henry and Thomas Erskine belonged, who kicked it from his door, in the full belief that the contumely offered by his aristocratic toe would finally destroy the influence of the young and unabashed periodical.

So far the new party had the best of the fight. Even those who were most opposed to them admit that they counted on their side the brightest and most energetic amongst the young men of the day.[2] They were, by their position and by their inspiring motives, quick to

[1] The article was written, it is understood, by Brougham, and was strongly denounced even by some of his fellow-contributors.

[2] This is the verdict of Lockhart in "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." But we must not forget that Lockhart was writing anonymously, and that the compliment may have been prompted, as much by a desire to conceal his own identity as by the sincerity of his belief in its truth. The "Letters" contain a good many hints that rather attenuate the praise.

attack and ready of fence. In the existing state of things they had, undoubtedly, much to provoke their ridicule, and much to give point to their smart invective. They mistook their own restlessness and ambition for missionary zeal; they fancied they were born to reform the world; and they exaggerated the cleverness of their own invective because they saw so clearly the absurdity of much that they attacked. But the moment that they ventured on decided advocacy of opinions which had many enemies they found themselves in turn attacked. The business of publishing was just at that period acquiring new and unprecedented activity in Scotland. Hitherto the booksellers had proceeded on narrow lines, and had never ventured to gauge the possibilities before them. One of the most notable of the older school was Creech, whose shop was the resort of the *literati* of Edinburgh, and who was himself a notable figure in the social and civic life of Edinburgh, but whose business ventures never went much beyond that of agent for the London publishers. In Scotland education was so diffused as to offer splendid scope for new enterprise by providing a wide reading public. The possibility was first perceived by Archibald Constable, and he saw with unerring judgment that authorship, like any other employment, must be based on business principles. He had already partly worked the rich mine that lay in the genius of Scott. He made a bold appeal to the reading public, and was thus able to offer a price for his literary wares that was a revelation to the world of letters. It was in the pride of this new discovery, and the possibilities that it opened, that he launched the *Edinburgh Review*, and he maintained his supremacy until the spirit of party, added to trade competition, started new rivals to his power.

He had started the idea of authorship as something which might yield a high recompense to the author, and yet enrich the publisher; and it was as a business enterprise that he fostered the zeal of the promoters of the *Edinburgh Review*.

But Archibald Constable was now to meet a rival: and Blackwood soon found an opportunity of making himself the literary agent of the opposite party. Much to their surprise the Whigs found that they possessed no monopoly of controversial deftness, and that the art of using the weapons of sarcasm and ridicule in controversy was not theirs alone. They had found it easy to lead an attack: they found it more difficult to meet the outspoken jests of a keen, a cynical, and a sarcastic band of opponents. In 1817 *Blackwood's Magazine* was started, and the young Whigs, who had assumed a *rôle* which they could fill to their own complete satisfaction in the ridicule of their elders, found that their own withers were susceptible of considerable wringing. In the satire of the Chaldæan MS., contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*, the caustic pen of Lockhart found an admirable vehicle for ridiculing the members of the Whig party. In the heat of the fight personalities were permitted which not even literary skill could excuse, and which have fortunately ceased to be in accordance with the taste of a respectable reading public.

Meanwhile some notable incidents had occurred in the history of parties. Pitt had found it necessary to face, in addition to the vast burden of costly and not very successful war, the galling aggravation of Irish rebellion, which a generous fiscal policy towards Ireland had done nothing to avert. He provided a

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wholesome sedative in legislative union; but when he attempted to add to that measure one for the removal of Catholic disabilities, he had found himself met by such opposition from the king as compelled him to resign in 1801. The Government of Addington, who took his place, involved no decided change of policy; it was only a shadow of Pitt's administration, without the guidance of the master hand. When war broke out again in 1803, in spite of all efforts to avert it, there could be little difference of opinion as to the danger with which an overwhelming military despotism was threatening, not England only, but all Europe. One pilot alone was fit to face the storm, and for three years more Pitt stood forth, the "beacon light" in danger, the "warder on the hill." But just at the crisis of her fate the "stately column broke," the "beacon light was quenched in smoke." Crushed by anxiety, with a burden too great for broken health to bear, amidst clouds and thick darkness, Pitt closed his marvellous career. Before he died, his heart had received its bitterest wound in the virulent, but somewhat ignoble assault which, amidst the plaudits of a crowd of respectable mediocrities, was made upon his closest friend, Henry Dundas, now Lord Melville. It was in 1805 that a paltry charge was started against Melville, which the solemn pedantry of some who ought to have known better magnified or degraded into a charge of embezzlement. Administrative reform had in the last generation made immense advances; but as an inheritance from the past, considerable irregularity in the system of public accounts had not unnaturally survived. In the inquiries of a Commission it had emerged that some such irregularity had occurred in the accounts of the Navy when Dundas

had been Treasurer. One of his subordinate officers, a zealous and devoted civil servant, had apparently been allowed to transgress some rules which had only of recent years been enforced; and money belonging to the naval accounts had been employed for other services. How far the petty irregularity in the behaviour of the accounting officers had gone it is difficult to say; but no one who knew Dundas could suspect him personally of any dishonesty or greed of personal gain. When first called upon for explanations he had treated the inquiries somewhat cavalierly; and in the consciousness of personal rectitude he had refused any explicit answers. His enemies found here just the means of a telling attack which suited them; and one is tempted to even greater provocation against the apparent friends who admitted with astonishing ease the probability of charges, from which Dundas's character might alone have been a sufficient defence. An impeachment followed, before the House of Lords. Not for the first time in recent memory all the theatrical ceremony of a State trial was invoked in order to give dignity to what was really a mockery of legal procedure, in which the solemn pharisaism of austere political virtue was allied with the paltrier venom of political animosity, in order to magnify into a portentous charge of corruption and malversation, what was at most but a condonation, on the part of a minister, overwhelmed with vast responsibilities at a great crisis in the nation's history, of some irregularity in the accounts of his subordinates. The ultimate result was the dissipation of the cloud of suspicion; but such was the virulence of faction that even the acquittal did not prevent insinuations of guilt, or turn aside the cowardly and ungenerous

animosity which studiously kept alive memories that served to weigh down the influence of an opponent too strong to be crushed by other means. When the charge was first started it was hailed with unseemly joy by those who had been wont to tremble at Dundas's voice. But this triumph, although it produced some notable effects, and above all added an additional bitterness to the anxieties of Pitt's closing days, was short-lived. The clamour was still at its height when Pitt died in January 1806. His Ministry was succeeded by that of All the Talents—with Lord Grenville as Prime Minister, Thomas Erskine as Lord Chancellor, Henry Erskine as Lord Advocate, and Lord Lauderdale as the manager of Scottish affairs. Under that Ministry the trial began in April 1806; and it ended in June, in a triumphal acquittal. The tide now turned quickly. The news was received with joy in Scotland, where those who knew Lord Melville, both friends and foes, were well aware that peculation was one of those petty crimes to which his life and character gave the lie. Edinburgh proposed to celebrate his triumph by a public illumination. Political foresight and tact, no less than generosity, would have prompted his opponents to remain quiescent in the national rejoicing, even if they did not share it. But by a strange excess of timidity or of spite the outward manifestation of that rejoicing was prevented by John Clerk, now Solicitor-General, who issued a warning to the magistrates, on the ground that the illumination might lead to rioting.

The Ministry that was guilty of this pettiness was short-lived and ineffectual. They attempted changes in the Law Courts, which on many grounds seemed reasonable enough, but which were certain to cause

searchings of heart amongst those who suspected all such reform as a tampering with the Union. Some of their proposals were carried out by their successors, but they were themselves unlucky enough to incur the odium of first mooting the change, and at the same time to lose the credit of succeeding in the attempt.

The Ministry fell in April 1807, and the real power of Melville was at once restored. He was once more sworn of the Privy Council, and although his place in the Government was taken by his son, his influence in Scottish affairs continued to his death.

The fall of the Ministry of All the Talents brought to an end the short-lived gleam of sunshine that had fallen upon the Whigs of Parliament House. Their reign had not been a prosperous one. Henry Erskine had once again, after an interval of three-and-twenty years, donned the gown of Lord Advocate. He had entered Parliament, but he had done so with two heavy make-weights against him—the burden of years and of a great reputation. The wit which shone brightly in a circle accustomed to the easy domination of his graceful personality found no scope in the new scene of the House of Commons. His eloquence was already recognised in Westminster Hall, where the Court of Appeal had been thronged by a critical audience eager to compare him with his younger brother, who had won the greatest triumphs of the English Bar; but it never succeeded in gaining for him a Parliamentary reputation, even although the powerful personality of Pitt, which had been like an incubus on the facile eloquence of Thomas Erskine, was removed. It may be doubted also whether he fully retained his influence in his own party, even although his name was a rallying-point, and still had all its efficacy as a centre of affection

and of pride. But the Erskine family was no longer dominant in the councils of the party. The brilliant career of the Lord Chancellor was destined before many years were over to fall under a cloud. The overweening vanity and almost insane eccentricity of Lord Buchan made him the object of amusement rather than respect; and Henry Erskine was not of the stuff out of which a failing party can fashion a useful tool. No wonder that he found his merits recognised more in words than in deeds, and that, when the Whigs were hoping, a few years later, to secure some new influence through the unstable and fickle alliance of the Prince Regent, one of their wire-pullers should have written, in words that unwittingly came to the eyes of Henry Erskine, "We must get rid of the Erskines."[1] Erskine, indeed, was to owe to the generosity of the Tories, and not to the loyalty of his own party, his nearest approach to high judicial office.[2]

Meanwhile the Tories recovered their power, not only by the renewed influence of the Dundas family, but by the conspicuous talents and character of some of their leaders. Some of the foremost of the Whigs gradually gravitated towards their party. Lord Moira and Lord Minto, successively Governors-General of India, were now more closely associated with the Tories than the Whigs. In 1808, Robert Blair, whose calm strength and superiority to personal ambition won for him the unquestioning respect alike of political foes and friends, became Lord President, and for two short years gave all the weight of his consummate

[1] Ferguson's "Henry Erskine and his Times," p. 513.

[2] In 1804 Charles Hope, who had long been his friend, in spite of sharp political controversy, had pressed upon him the post of Lord Justice-Clerk, which Hope accepted only after Erskine's positive refusal.

intellect to enhancing the dignity and authority of the Court, and to improving its procedure, and established a reputation that made his premature death fall on all with the effect of a national calamity.[1] When Lord Melville passed suddenly away while awaiting the funeral of his friend Blair, and in the house next to that in which Blair had died, he transmitted much of his own influence as the secure inheritance of his son. It was only the modesty of his nephew—now the Chief Baron—which prevented him from acceding to the solicitation that he should accept the headship of the Court which his father and his grandfather had filled so well.

During these years, from 1807 to 1816, the office of Lord Advocate was held by Archibald Colquhoun of Killermont, a man of high respectability, and distinguished as one of the intimate friends of Scott, but commanding no weight of political influence. The management of Scottish affairs during these years rested chiefly with the Dundas family. The larger questions of reform were for the time laid to rest, but the Government during these years remodelled the Court of Session, which in 1808 ceased to sit as one Chamber, and was reconstituted as two Divisions, one of which was presided over by the Lord President and the other by the Lord Justice-Clerk. In 1815 there was established the Jury Court, with three Commissioners, for the trial of civil cases with a jury. This did not indicate any bigoted resistance to change, and it looked as if minor reforms at least might be carried out with the assent of both parties.

[1] One of the most notable compliments ever paid to Blair was the *sotto-voce* remark of John Clerk, when Blair had demolished in a few sentences an elaborate but sophistical argument by Clerk—"Eh, man! God Almighty spared nae pains when he made your brains."

The literary struggle, however, was maintained with no cessation of energy, but rather with an increase of bitterness, between the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. The latter was carried on with a recklessness of satire and invective which could be excused only by the youth and audacity of men who loathed the self-complacency and narrowness which, in literary as well as in political measures, they attributed to those who had first brought the weapon of ridicule to bear, and who proved so sensitive to attacks which they had certainly provoked.

Meanwhile in the field of practical politics there was little active fighting. The nation was now at one in regard to the war, and all other thoughts were hushed in the absorbing impression of national danger. In Charles Hope, who had succeeded Blair as Lord President, the Court had a distinguished head, whose character gave him a commanding sway, and who had now stript much of the impetuous ardour which had in earlier days sometimes impelled him to a partisanship, always honest, but occasionally injurious to his judicial character. On the whole the administration of Scotland, although too much concentrated in a single clique, and repressing with too blind a Toryism the tendencies that were making for inevitable change, was yet none the less vigorous and able, and by no means lacking in enlightenment.

But the heavy cloud of national danger was dispelled in 1815, and the result of the sudden closing of the long foreign war was to create, or at least to give impetus to, serious domestic difficulties. What these were we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE OLDER TORYISM AND ITS FAILURE.

In 1815, the close of the war, in the battle of Waterloo, marked an epoch the like of which had hardly occurred in the history of the British nation. The nightmare that had weighed on the souls of a generation had suddenly passed away. The bands of an iron and aggressive tyranny were shattered. The long travail of an arduous and often hopeless struggle in which Pitt and Nelson had spent their lives was now over. The cost had been heavy, but the prize was won, and the greatness of the country was once more vindicated before the world. The event affected different men in the Scottish nation according to their temperaments and their sympathies. Some, like old Professor Ferguson, took it as a double release, and were content to close their lives in what was to them the calm sunset after a long and stormy day. Others felt that it braced their patriotism anew, and inspired them with hopes of still better days to come for their nation. Others again felt it only as a relief from what they deemed a too great burden of military spirit, and were glad that the nation was freed from the overwhelming pressure of a great cause, the enthusiasm for which had not appealed to their imaginations, and

which had never compensated them for the postponement of domestic reforms upon which their political party had staked its future. It is curious to note how some of them received it—not so much as the breaking of a dark and dismal cloud achieved by the steadfastness of the nation, but rather as the turning-point which might make their little schemes bulk more largely in the eyes of a nation that had escaped from one absorbing effort. "The appearance of everything was changed," says Cockburn. "Fear of invasion, contempt of economy, the glory of our arms, the propriety of suppressing every murmur at any home abuse, the utter absorption of every feeling in the duty of warlike union—these and other principles, which for twenty years had sunk the whole morality of patriotism in the single object of acknowledging no defect or grievance in our system, in order that we might be more powerful abroad, became all inapplicable to existing things." It is a strange and ill-assorted catalogue, entirely ignoring the fact that for these twenty years the nation had been right in feeling that one duty stood pre-eminent above all others, and that the absorption in that duty was not only a necessity of national existence, but a means of strengthening the moral fibre of the nation. The crisis had passed, and brought time and leisure for other thoughts, but it was easy for the parochial politician to forget that the devotion which that crisis had called forth had a value in itself, and that the substitution of a state of things which left the scene free for the lesser fights of political parties was not all pure gain. The war had certainly retarded much-needed reforms, but it was absurd to suppose that with the more ardent and patriotic spirits the romance of war should suddenly

pass away, and that they should rest contented with the more demure and less exciting work of pursuing internal reform. Memories of factious opposition rankled in their thoughts, and they were in no way disposed to turn a willing ear to proposals that had been urged amidst the smoke of cannon and in the extremity of national danger.

But the nation emerged from the war transformed in its whole character. Material conditions had vastly changed. New ideas had taken hold of the minds of men, new interests occupied their thoughts. Changes in the social state which had been imperfectly measured amid the noise of battle, now became apparent in all their force and significance.

During the quarter of a century that ended with 1815, Whiggism had been gradually crushed out of the higher social ranks of Scotland by the sheer weight of Tory predominance. The personal influence of Henry Dundas had done much to accomplish this. But many circumstances had helped him. The hard-headed common-sense of the nation was impatient of theories and of doctrinaire schemes of reform which were, to say the least of it, ill-timed. Wealth was increasing, and those who were busy in acquiring a share of it had no mind to be diverted from the pursuit by whimsical plans of reform, which were somewhat impatiently classed with revolution. The sense of nationality was strong, and that sense is always inclined to be Conservative in its sympathies. The respect for tradition, for family influence, for a certain rugged discipline which accommodated itself to the temper of the nation, was a powerful ally of the Tories. It is true that some of the distinctive features of that discipline had passed away. Social

usage had been strangely modified. The old rigidity of manners had been softened and made more adaptable. The high and impregnable fortress of Presbyterian doctrine had fallen before the assaults of modern thought. Daring speculations had transformed Scotland from the most dogmatic to the most latitudinarian of nations. All this, it might have been thought, would have had a precisely opposite effect, and instead of confirming the domination of the Tories might have prepared the way for the triumph of the Whigs. But we must remember who were the chief representatives of this easier code of morals, and this latitudinarian type of religion. They were the Moderates in the Church; the professional classes who held all that privilege and hereditary right could give them, who advocated greater freedom in morals and religion not because they hated tradition or longed for change, but because they disliked the bigotry, the narrowness, and the obstinacy which they associated with the stricter school, and who refused to accommodate themselves to a code of morals and religion which would have robbed of its charm that easy and pleasant social life which was the most prized of their privileges. The High-flying party provoked their sense of humour, and humour, always a powerful ingredient in the composition of feeling and of sentiment, is apt to prove an element of divergence rather than of union between an intellectual class and its less educated fellow-citizens. Thus it was that the very elements that were working to remodel Scottish society, and to transform Scottish character, became allies of the Tories, and helped to draw them further and further from the classes below. The more that

Toryism came to crush out the nascent seeds of Whiggism from the upper class of society, the more reforming zeal penetrated the lower classes, and seemed to gather to itself some of the enthusiasm of the older Covenanters, and to appeal to impulses in the heart of the nation which were the strongest and the most enduring.

The more that the reforming spirit, expelled from the upper classes of society, filtered downwards, the more extreme became its aims, and the more bold and violent its methods. It was no longer a question of calling small and select meetings of professional men, of agitating for Parliamentary and burgh reforms, and of indulging in vague aspirations after liberty. On the contrary the new and wider Radical party was animated by a sullen discontent; its spirit was that of obstinate and dogged resistance to authority; its aims were socialistic and subversive; and its methods were those of the secret association, which was prepared at small provocation to proceed to violent means. The contagion of the times had bred a fever in the blood, but very palpable outward circumstances aggravated that fever, and made the inflammation spread.

The change in the social condition of Scotland during the generation that had just passed, had been extraordinarily rapid and far-reaching. From being a nation almost incredibly poor, it had already laid the foundations of manufacturing and commercial wealth. The towns were growing with surprising quickness. The country districts would in any case have been deserted under the attractions of constant employment and comparatively easy wages which were open in the manufacturing centres. But the state

of agriculture was, from independent causes, telling in the same direction. More enlightened methods were pursued, agricultural experiments became a favourite hobby, increased capital was required, and as a natural consequence large farms took the place of petty holdings, and the rural population was necessarily decreased. So far as the Highlands were concerned the same thing occurred on a vast scale. The political economists of the day saw—and, so far as their own range of vision extended, saw quite correctly—that the best commercial use of the vast tracts of Highland land was not to attempt upon them a feeble culture which a sterile soil and an inclement sky alike forbade. To people these tracts with sheep was a scheme of eminent commercial sagacity; whether its social wisdom was so certain is quite another question. It was due to Sir John Sinclair's restless and pervading influence that vast flocks of Cheviot sheep now occupied the mountains which a few years ago had been valueless, except as the homes of a numerous and ignorant, but withal an interesting, population. The Highland estates became enormously more valuable; but they lost their population. In place of petty occupiers, who maintained a precarious existence upon their scanty holdings, there came a few well-to-do tenants who could afford to stock the land; who paid good rents with perfect regularity, but who owned no allegiance to their landlord, and were disposed to resist any domination on his part. Those who, fifty years before, had been the poor but almost insanely proud members of a clan which owed obedience only to its chief, now found a home across the Atlantic, or swelled the crowd of artisans who sought employment in the

towns. But if an increasing manufacture brings a wave of wealth, it brings also a surf of poverty, and leaves a flotsam and jetsam of misery and discontent which has no parallel amongst the population of a mountain-side. To these last money payments were almost unknown, but they rarely lacked that small modicum of sustenance with which habit had made them content. Glasgow had ceased to be a little town upon the banks of an insignificant river, scarcely known except as the seat of an ancient university. Its population and its wealth were advancing by leaps and bounds. It had already a foretaste of its great future as an emporium for the world. But its demure and cautious burgesses no longer found themselves surrounded by a well-disciplined and respectful bevy of apprentices and artisans. They had to fight for every inch of commercial ground they gained, and the city already held in its midst the beginnings of the noisome slums and Alsatias where the artificers of that wealth were crowded in disease, and squalor, and discontent. The old comradeship, the old sympathy between class and class, the old feeling of kindly nationality which bridged over the gulf between different ranks and softened the contrasts of wealth and poverty — these were things that could not breathe in the atmosphere that gathered about the crowded dwellings of the Glasgow artisans.

There were those also, not pent in city lanes, and conning day by day and hour by hour their theme of discontent, but scattered amongst the outlying counties, whom economical conditions made the object of pity and of reproach to the national conscience. The Highlands, as we have seen, had undergone a vast change. Depopulation was a sad and regrettable

remedy; but had it been suffered to proceed unchecked it would have worked its cure. Unfortunately, however, it was checked, and that in the most unwholesome way, by the influence of artificial causes. The heavy duties placed on salt and barilla, which were the sources from which soda could most easily and cheaply be obtained, rendered it impossible to use them with profit for the purpose. Some substitute had to be found, and, most unfortunately for the Western Highlands, it was found in the kelp gathered in the seaweed. As the price of soda grew, the kelp manufacture, which was profitable only in consequence of an unwise import duty, was enormously developed, and became a staple industry in these unhappy regions. It gave a false stimulus to population; once again these regions, which could not by any bounty of Nature rear more than a scanty number of inhabitants, became crowded beyond their capacity. The artificial stimulus died away, and a state of matters even more distressful than that which followed upon the dissolution of the old clan system and the sweeping away of the smaller holdings again presented itself.

Throughout the whole of Scotland there was thus growing, in spite of all its advance in wealth and in commercial activity, an uneasy sense of discontent. Social conditions had grown up with which existing social arrangements could not grapple. Poverty was growing side by side with wealth; and the question soon forced itself upon the attention—How was that problem of poverty to be dealt with?

In the later years of the war matters had been steadily going from bad to worse. From 1808 to 1813 there had been a series of bad harvests. Foreign supplies were closed, and, as a consequence, there

had been an enormous rise in prices—wheat rising from 75s. to 108s. a quarter. This naturally gave an artificial stimulus to agriculture. In 1813 there had been an abundant harvest. Two years later came the peace, which suddenly opened the Continental markets, with their competition fatal to the farmer at home. In 1815 wheat fell to 60s. a quarter; and in order to safeguard the agricultural interest, the price at which corn could be imported was raised from 66s. to 80s. An inflated agricultural prosperity was bolstered up by artificial legislative restrictions, already condemned by the most enlightened thinkers of the day.

The evil was not confined to agriculture. There had been an immense amount of over-trading. Goods had been thrown upon the foreign markets far in excess of the demand. The rapid growth of wealth had stimulated emulation beyond the bounds of prudence. Bankruptcies ensued. The manufactures received a sudden check. Thousands were thrown out of employment; starvation threatened the thick-pent populations of the larger towns; and sanitary arrangements were so utterly neglected that disease soon followed upon the heels of want. Wages fell to the starvation-point; and yet in 1816 the crop was once again very bad, and war prices prevailed. The hand-loom weavers, whose occupation was just that which gave most opportunity for the perpetual discussion of grievances that gradually rubs them into a sore, were thrown out of employment. Disaffection was rife, and it was scarcely kept in check by a threatening display of military force. Now, in face of a lately acquired peace, and when the nation had scarcely done rejoicing over a splendid victory, she seemed to be torn by internal discussions far more dangerous and more fierce

than those which had been crushed with an impatient, and perhaps somewhat ruthless, hand in 1793. In the face of such a state of things, one party desired to make these discussions the instrument of their own political advancement; the other was disposed unduly to neglect them, because the memory of the struggle in which the nation's very existence had been imperilled was yet fresh upon them.

To deal with such a state of matters there was required a Government at once firm and enlightened. Without any tampering with the forces of Revolution, a far-seeing Ministry might have shaped the new impulses to good ends, and might have reconstructed the political machine so as to have fitted it to new social conditions, and given to all classes their share in the vastly increased wealth and power of the Empire. Unfortunately no such Ministry appeared; and for a dozen years the titular Prime Minister was Lord Liverpool, the man of all others least capable of impressing himself on such an epoch. He was eminently respectable, conscientious, and industrious; with sufficient tact and conciliation to combine in his Administration the most diverse elements, and yet to provoke no jealousy against himself. But he was essentially a mediocrity; and as such he was First Minister during twelve years of most critical importance in our history, and yet shaped no policy, had not the faintest conception of political reconstruction, was blind to all the deeper movements of the time. He had inherited the traditions of a narrow clique, and believed it to be a part of the scheme of Providence that this clique should be left undisturbed in their privileges, and, in the slumber of a respectable lethargy, should dispose of the destinies of the country. They

thought themselves to be the defenders of the Constitution and to be keeping Revolution at bay. The opposite faction raged against them as tyrants and denounced them for their stubborn resistance to Reform. In truth, they were only dullards, whose imagination could not even conceive the magnitude of the task that had fallen upon them.

But Lord Liverpool's premiership covered a long series of years and a chameleon-like change of policy. Himself the creature of circumstance, he serves only as a titular connecting-link between men of the most diverse character and tendencies the most opposite. The first part of his term of office was that in which the master-spirit was Castlereagh — that dark and lurid character, whose name became a by-word of reproach amongst the opposite party, as representing all that was most reactionary and repressive in the Toryism which they held to be only a form of the worst political profligacy. It was, indeed, far from being even a tolerable *régime*. It represents all the worst features of a narrow, selfish, and lethargic oligarchy, which vainly imagined that it could grasp the sceptre dropped by Pitt.

The second period in Liverpool's premiership is that in which, under his titular headship, there were combined three men who, each of them, represented a principle and a policy; now bound together by a mutual respect, now estranged by radical difference of view; each rendering to the other that homage which magnanimity demands, and which it instinctively accords; perplexed by misunderstandings, but nevertheless conscious, as their predecessors never were, of the greatness and dignity of their task, and each earning his honoured place in history by virtue

of political insight, of courage, and of great achievement. If the first part of Liverpool's premiership is stained by the selfishness of a narrow and purblind clique, the second is ennobled by the names of Canning, of Wellington, and of Peel. The first period was one in which it seemed that the Government held its duty performed when it was quick to take alarm and stern in its repression. The second was one in which new ideas were pressing to the front, and in which differences of opinion amongst the leaders rested not upon nervous timidity and selfish intrigue, but upon broad grounds of principle. The lesser spawn of faction still knew only the old names and the old passwords of party, but the Toryism of Peel and Canning had as little in common with the Toryism of Castlereagh as light has with darkness.

It is, however, no part of our business here to enter into the details of party struggles in the arena of St. Stephens, nor to trace the course of Imperial politics. We are concerned with these only as they affect the history of Scotland. And here also we can see that the difference between the two periods is clearly reflected, however little the adherents of each party, immersed in the personal struggle, might perceive the larger issues involved.

In 1816, when the alarm was at its height, and when discontent was rapidly ripening into revolt and social anarchy, the Lord Advocate Colquhoun was promoted to the office of Lord Clerk Register. To the place thus left vacant, which was soon to involve difficulties calling for consummate tact and most delicate statesmanship, there succeeded Alexander Maconochie, a man of mediocre talent and of no commanding position at the Bar, known chiefly as the

son of a judge who had acquired high reputation in his day. Upon him, in conjunction with a typical member of Lord Liverpool's earlier Administration, Lord Sidmouth, then Home Secretary, fell the duty of providing against the danger with which Scottish society, especially in the city of Glasgow, appeared then to be threatened. The weavers of that city had lately entered into a combination for demanding higher wages, which had been checked and punished with the rigour which the law then dealt out to all such combinations. But this only aggravated the discontent. The combinations now assumed the form of active political associations, which undoubtedly cherished designs of violent measures to subvert existing society. They had their counterparts in England; and in Scotland, as in England, the Government set itself to countermine these machinations by the doubtful and dangerous expedient of political espionage. The spies of the Government comprised one Richmond, who had himself narrowly escaped the penalty of the law as a member of one of the trade combinations, and whose honesty was as open to doubt as that of the fraternity of informers usually is. From his information it became known that the weavers' association had bound itself by an oath to adopt violent measures if its grievances were not removed; and suspicion was attached even to the men of the Black Watch, then quartered at Glasgow. Richmond, from some scruple, refused himself to take the oath, the taking of which might have helped him to obtain further information, but he was able, nevertheless, to procure what purported to be a copy of it for the use of his employers.

In the beginning of 1817, the state of tension, both in England and Scotland, became still more strained.

An attack was made on the Prince Regent by the London mob as he was returning from opening Parliament; and this was at once made the ground for introducing such coercive measures as had been adopted in 1795 after a similar attack upon the King. It was proposed to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. The debate took place on the 26th of February, just after the Lord Advocate had taken his seat as member for the borough of Yarmouth in the Isle of Wight. The House still hesitated to adopt a measure so severe as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus; but its scruples were removed when at a critical point in the debate the Lord Advocate read to the House the terms of the oath disclosed by Richmond. In view of such clear evidence of daring disaffection the objections of the Whigs were swept aside and the proposed measure became law.

Arrests were now made in Scotland, and two offenders, Alexander Maclaren, a weaver, and Thomas Baird, a grocer, were arraigned, the first for uttering a speech incentive to violence, and the second for having published it. Maclaren was a workman whose record was good. He had been employed as foreman, but the pressure in the labour market had reduced him to absolute penury, so that even with superior skill he could earn only five shillings a week for fifteen hours of labour a day. He had been a sergeant in the Volunteers, and, until the grip of poverty had made him desperate, seems to have been a loyal supporter of the Administration and an opponent of disorder. His crime was that at an open-air meeting held at Kilmarnock on a wild winter's night, he had used some dangerous expressions. He had urged his hearers to petition the Crown. "Let us," he said, "lay our petitions at the foot of the throne, where sits our august prince, whose gracious nature

will incline his ear to listen to the cries of his people, which he is bound to do by the laws of the country. But should he be so infatuated as to turn a deaf ear to their just petition, he has forfeited their allegiance. Yes, my fellow-townsmen, in such a case, *to hell with our allegiance.*" He had spoken of the House of Commons as decayed and corrupted ; as "not really what it is called, not a House of Commons." He had declaimed against a Government who, in the midst of the French Revolution, with its aspirations after liberty, had "declared war not only against the French nation, but against the friends of liberty at home." He had abused the "hirelings of the Church." He had declared England to have been governed for twenty-five years by "a usurped oligarchy, who pretend to be our guardians and representatives, while, in fact, they are nothing but our inflexible and determined enemies." These words were strong. They may have had some justification, but however posterity may judge, practical politics must always be chary of admitting justification for an incentive to sedition. They were, however, such as would at a calmer time at most have been received with some severe, perhaps some contemptuous, criticisms. He was an unpractised speaker; he had been unwilling to appear as spokesman at all ; and had it judged his words with the calm impartiality of confidence, the Government might have easily found an excuse for the vehemence of a starving man. Baird was a man of higher station and of more prosperous circumstances. He also had been connected with the Volunteer force, where he had held a captain's commission, and while a sincere, he had always been a moderate, advocate of Parliamentary Reform. His crime was that of having printed and disseminated the

speeches made at the meeting, although he had in vain remonstrated against the violence of some of the expressions.

In all this there was nothing which could not have been safely left without notice, and certainly without criminal prosecution. But the Government determined to prosecute on the somewhat vague charge of sedition, which had been invoked in the trials of 1793, and which was more comprehensive than the crime of "leasing-making," although the latter was better known to Scottish jurisprudence. But "leasing-making" involved a personal offence against the sovereign, which might have been hard to prove. The charge of sedition was more dangerous to personal liberty, because the proof rested upon a series of more or less doubtful inferences with regard to the effect of words, as to which difference of opinion was inevitable. No specific act had to be proved; no definite consequences had to be shown to follow from the words. It was enough to demonstrate that the words were such as would direct hatred, contempt, or distrust against any part of the Constitution. Arguments on such a theme must always be somewhat subtle, and their inferences more or less remote; and in such a case the resort to fear or prejudice in support of the arguments which the prosecuting counsel employed was almost certain.

It cannot be said that there was any browbeating of witnesses, or any such evident bias on the Bench as had been seen when Braxfield conducted the trials of 1793. Both the Court and the prosecuting counsel were studiously courteous, and treated the defending counsel with ample respect. But they gave voice to the general uneasiness which pervaded the upper classes, and felt no doubt whatever as to the im-

perative duty which lay upon them to save society by crushing out any inflammatory appeals to a starving and discontented crowd of workmen. Behind all their arguments there is a fixed conviction that in the main the Constitution, as it existed, was excellent, and that to attack it was a crime. Abstract opinions on Reform might be held, but if they were based on condemnation of existing arrangements—and it is hard to say on what else an argument in favour of Reform could be based—then they became criminal. Particular Ministries might be criticised and attacked, but if the attack became general, if it was directed against the constitution of any existing Estate of the realm, then it was seditious, and was held to deserve condign punishment as such.

The defending counsel were John Clerk, a fierce and pugnacious Whig of the older school, and Francis Jeffrey, whose eloquence was such that even Lord Hermand, with that generous and impetuous frankness that was characteristic of him, declared that if he had been a juryman, and had been obliged to give a verdict after that speech, he feared that his own judgment would have been led astray, and thanked Heaven that no such duty was imposed upon him. No very intolerant prejudice existed where such kindly criticism was dealt out to the eloquence of Jeffrey by a judge whose political opinions were diametrically opposed to all that Jeffrey represented.

The defence offered by him did not apparently rise to any very great height of forensic eloquence. There were the same appeals as in 1793 to the vehement rhetoric of Pitt and the Duke of Richmond in favour of Reform, as justifying the expressions

which were now arraigned as seditious; and these appeals were answered, as they had been answered before, by telling the jurymen that it was not their duty to find that lawless expressions, which might have been uttered in the past, rendered such expressions less lawless as now arraigned, and that the fact of the House of Commons having neglected to notice, and even condoned, dangerous rhetoric, was no reason why such dangerous rhetoric was now to be excused. Jeffrey could quote from the mouth of Lord Meadowbank, the father of the Lord Advocate, bold and fervid words in favour of the resort to armed resistance; but it was answered with that logical precision which, however cogent in form, is apt to fail in being persuasive, that the fact that armed resistance might at times be a moral duty, did not render it any the less a legal crime.

The jury found the prisoners guilty, and they were sentenced to the comparatively mild punishment of six months' imprisonment. But such a conviction could not strengthen the Administration, and the honours of the fight remained with the defending counsel and with the political party to which they belonged.

The result of the next trial was even more unfortunate. The Rev. Neil Douglas, who belonged to the sect of the Universalists, or those who, in opposition to Calvinistic doctrine, preached the creed of universal salvation, carried on religious worship in a hall of the Andersonian Institute in John Street, Glasgow. His congregation consisted of the poorest class, and his pulpit manner seems to have combined a certain rude imaginative power with a perfervid rapidity of utterance that made the old man at times

unintelligible. In lecturing upon the Book of Daniel, he drew a somewhat dangerous parallel between Nebuchadnezzar and George III., and between Belshazzar and the Prince Regent. Much depended upon the application of the parallel, and it was difficult to say whether the poor King was said to be driven from the society of men for crimes like those of Nebuchadnezzar, or only likened to the Babylonian king in fate, although distinguished from him in life and character. In any case, the preacher evidently prayed for the King and Prince with a fervour which might claim to be loyal, even although it might infer a somewhat uncomplimentary assumption of the urgent need for Divine intervention on their behalf. Jeffrey and Cockburn were the defending counsel, and they had an easy task in procuring the acquittal of the prisoner; the Solicitor-General had himself only ventured to ask a verdict of not proven.

The Crown counsel now directed their efforts to a new batch of trials, which were to turn upon the evidence of the informers they had employed, and which were to fix guilt upon some of those who had taken the oath which had been read to the House of Commons with such dramatic effect by the Lord Advocate. The principal trial was that of Andrew M'Kinlay, a Glasgow weaver. There seems to be little doubt that M'Kinlay was implicated in a treasonable association, and that he had administered the seditious oath which bound the adherents of that association. But the conduct of the Crown lawyers was bungling and inept, at the very moment when bungling and ineptitude were most fatal. The charge was at first one of treason. That was abandoned, and again and again new indictments were attempted.

Alike the friends and the opponents of the Administration were stirred to anger and contempt. The Scottish Tory members felt themselves betrayed, and complained of the scandalous mismanagement of Government business. Romilly and the English Whig lawyers were joined with Brougham in open derision of the Lord Advocate Maconochie. Lord Sidmouth was, however, loyal to him, and at length, in July, the trial began. But it resulted in a dismal failure. The case was ill-prepared. The witnesses were doubtful and suspect. In such a case it is almost inevitable that recourse be had to those who turn Crown witnesses in order to procure safety for themselves. This must necessarily give rise to suspicion, and for that very reason scrupulous care must be observed. The Crown witnesses were kept secluded. The agents for the defence were denied access to them, and were not even told what their testimony was to be. Finally, one of them managed, by throwing from the window of the room where he was confined a roll of tobacco in which a paper was concealed, to convey the impression to the prisoners' friends that he was being bribed to betray his old confederates. On the day of the trial a dramatic scene occurred. This witness was asked in the usual formal way "whether any one had given him a reward, or promise of reward, for being a witness?" The answer, to the surprise of all, was "Yes." "By whom?" he was next asked. "By that gentleman"—pointing to the Advocate Depute. Rarely has such a scene taken place in a British court of law. We need not believe that the charge was strictly true. But the examination of the witness had been conducted with extreme carelessness and irregularity. It was admitted that promises of safety

had been given. This involved transport to another place, and from that to promise of a livelihood was but a short step. We may admit that the character of the leading Crown lawyers rendered it impossible to believe that they had personally been guilty of tampering with a witness. But inferior agents had been mixed up with the work, and it is more than probable that expressions had been used which gave countenance to the notion in the witness's mind that a distinct offer had been made to him. The Crown counsel were now the arraigned instead of the arraigners. The defending counsel knew how to make the best of this startling turn of matters. The trial was quickly closed with a verdict of Not Proven, and the remaining trials were abandoned. But the matter did not end there. The case was severely handled in the House of Commons, and covered the Scottish Administration not only with condemnation but contempt. Even the English Attorney-General could not assert that the course pursued by the Lord Advocate was consonant with English practice, and the defence made that the Lord Advocate was not only public prosecutor but a police magistrate, was one which had a dangerous and doubtful aspect. It was not surprising that proceedings which were not only abortive but discreditable closed the career of Maconochie as Lord Advocate. In 1819 he ascended the Bench with the title of Lord Meadowbank.

For a year matters went quietly enough. Discontent appeared to be less rife, and Government had no temptation to renew the prosecution. The agitation for Burgh and Parliamentary Reform continued, but it appeared to be carried on by more constitutional methods. The Cato Street conspiracy and the Man-

chester Riots, however, had shown the temper which prevailed in England, and Scotland was to follow suit.

In 1820 the office of Lord Advocate was filled by Sir William Rae, who had succeeded Maconochie. In some respects he was well qualified to represent the Scottish Bar. He was the son of Lord Eskgrove, a judge of the Court of Session, whose grotesque manners, coupled with a strong and outstanding character and a firm grasp of the older traditions of the Scottish legal school, had made him a notable personality, and a few years before his death this worthy judge obtained the honour of a baronetcy. His second son, Sir William Rae, was now the holder of the title. Sir William had never won a leading practice, and was one of those whom the newer and more energetic school of rising lawyers had pushed aside; but he was none the less a respectable representative of the older school, whose rigid Toryism was tempered by high character, however hemmed in by narrow conceptions of constitutional liberty. To his lot it fell to deal with a state of matters that came within measurable distance of civil war.

After the abortive trials of 1817 there had followed a period of comparative calm. But the distress increased, and with this distress came a fierce agitation for political change. Parliamentary Reform, although it had been pushed aside in the stress of war and of threatening danger, had been long a moot topic, discussed with more or less of moderation. It now assumed a more violent form. The name of Reformer was now discarded for that of Radical, and the more truculent methods now used were met by a corresponding bitterness on the opposite side. Both parties were facing one another with more hostile intent, and there

was a tension and strain in men's minds that boded no good to social order. The riots in Manchester in August 1819 brought the nation into the temper of armies spoiling for the fray, and into that mood where constitutional methods are apt to disappear in the bustle of opposing camps. A little spark would then suffice to kindle a conflagration. Before the year was over a meeting took place on Glasgow Green, in which the Manchester rioters were spoken of as the martyrs of liberty butchered by a selfish and ruthless Administration. Secret societies were organised, and there was an uneasy tension in men's minds like that electricity in the air which precedes a stormy convulsion in Nature. The combinations of workmen assumed a menacing form; bills were posted up inviting all operatives to abstain from labour on a certain day; and those who had any property to defend felt themselves to be on the brink of anarchy and revolution. The constitutional reformers discountenanced all violent methods, but it was only natural that, in the general alarm, they should be roughly confounded with the Radicals in a common condemnation. The Lord Advocate, who on the whole kept his head better than some of those higher in the Government, was not disposed to exaggerate the danger, but to have disregarded it would have been a gross neglect of his duty, and peace was preserved by an abundant display of armed force. In April 1820 there was recrudescence of the dangerous elements, and on Sunday, the 2nd of that month, the secret committee which called itself the "Committee of Organisation for forming a Provisional Government," posted proclamations commanding the people to cease from work, and summoning them to armed insurrection. Glasgow wore the appearance of

a city under martial law. The Yeomanry were called to arms, and while the peaceful citizens were on their way to church, when the streets should have been slumbering in their usual Sabbatical calm, they found every corner occupied by military pickets, and troops of hussars galloping through the city. It was rumoured that the London mail was to be stopped a few miles from Glasgow, and that this was to be the signal for open rebellion. It was easy for the Whigs, who chafed at their long exclusion from power, to blame the Government and to sneer at their unnecessary fears. Selfish bungling and an inability to discern the signs of the time might have had much to answer for in producing such a state of things. But the atmosphere was surcharged with excitement, and we can scarcely be surprised that the dominant party were in no mood to listen to counsel based on a belittling of their alarm. On the following day it was evident that one part of the orders of the Secret Committee had been obeyed, and for miles round Glasgow the labourers ceased from work and gathered in sullen and threatening crowds. On Wednesday it was believed that these crowds were to move against the city from the surrounding country, and that only by an overpowering display of military force were the would-be rioters to be held in check. Sixty thousand men were virtually gathered to defy the law, and bands of armed rioters marched about the roads, surrounding the country mansions and demanding the surrender of arms. The inhabitants were kept in a state of nervous tension, listening to the sounds of midnight drill, and the blacksmiths' shops were burst open, their owners expelled, and the forges used for the manufacture of pikes. Had the military force of Scotland been what it was seventy years before,

when the Highland clans marched unopposed into the heart of England, the Constitution would not have lasted for a day. At that time it was only the romantic and forlorn hope of a decaying party that had to be met; now it was the forces of Revolutionary violence that had to be held in check.

On the morning of Wednesday the 5th of April, when it was expected that the attempt was to be made, the authorities were found to be fully prepared. Five thousand troops were drawn up in the streets—more than enough to hold in check the disorganised and half-armed forces of lawlessness and anarchy. When night came on the crowds became more bold; drums were beat and shots exchanged. A crowd of three hundred men, more resolute than the rest, had the courage to face the soldiers, but a cavalry charge scattered them, and a dozen of the ringleaders were made prisoners. Farther off in the country, at Bonnymuir, the "Radical war," as it was called, rose almost to the semblance of a pitched battle. A band of armed rioters there attacked a trooper of the Yeomanry, whom they stopped on the highway. He returned to his headquarters, and a troop of Yeomen sent to disperse the crowd were met by a volley from the rioters. A few minutes ended the fray, and nineteen men were taken prisoners, after a hopeless struggle in which a few lost their lives. The Government could no longer trifle with such a state of affairs. The rioters were terrified, but mildness would soon have revived their spirits. The search for arms was vigorously prosecuted, and many arrests followed. A Commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued, and sat for the trial of the rioters between 23rd June and 9th

August at the places where the riots had been most outrageous—Stirling, Glasgow, Dumbarton, Paisley, and Ayr. It was composed of the Lord President Hope, the Lord Justice Clerk Boyle, with the Chief Baron and the Chief Commissioners of the recently established jury court, and two of the Justiciary Judges. In all, true Bills were found against ninety-eight persons, fifty-one of whom managed to escape. Twenty-four were sentenced to death, but only three were executed—Wilson, who was hanged at Glasgow on the 30th of August, and Hardie and Baird, who were hanged at Stirling on the 8th of September. Enough had been done to vindicate the law, and the Government had shown itself ready not only to check anarchy, but to impress upon the local authorities a wholesome sense of their responsibility for the maintenance of order.

But the difficulties of the Government did not end here. The Opposition was vigorous and alert, and was at no loss for material wherewith to feed the flame of discontent. They might deride the danger of anarchy and disorder which the Government had to meet, but they found their opportunity in a deep-rooted anger which pervaded the great mass of the nation. In proportion as the Government of Lord Liverpool increased the rigour of the Tory principles, the Whigs sought for new cries against them, and the middle-class was not slow to respond to their call. As Prince Regent, George IV. had been the ally of the Opposition, but he was now estranged from them, and in the degrading quarrel between himself and the Queen there was found a new means of attack upon the Government. Popular discontent assumed the championship of the Queen, and the vindication of

her fancied wrongs became a new rallying cry, however little her cause had to connect it with the graver incentives to discontent. The Administration found itself assailed at once by those who were jealous of the Tory monopoly of office and of power, by those who suffered from restrictive laws that fettered industry and crushed the popular voice, and by those who fancied that, in becoming the champions of a persecuted woman, they were resisting the high-handed tyranny of a profligate aristocracy that truckled to the Crown.

The popular aspect of this opposition showed itself by the common and not very convincing expedient of public meetings. Such meetings had long ceased to form an ordinary part of the public life of Scotland. To hold them in the open air was, under the existing code, illegal; and the Administration were able to close the doors of most of the public halls against those who sought to use them for the purpose. At the close of 1820 the Lord Provost of Edinburgh was asked to summon a public meeting in order to petition the King to dismiss his Ministers. He refused to do so, but the Whig leaders determined to proceed without his sanction. The meeting was held on the 16th of December at the Pantheon, a large building ordinarily used as a circus, and it was attended by all the leading Whigs of the capital. Abundant ridicule was thrown upon the scheme, and Tory poetasters made merry over the unabashed lust for office which they assumed to be the chief incentive of the Whigs. The meeting was large and enthusiastic, but its very size made it unruly, and gave to the other party an easy opportunity of deriding such an appeal to the mob in the interests, as was

asserted, of selfish seekers after office. The meeting was, indeed, dominated chiefly by the Whig section of the Parliament House, whose professional jealousies, perhaps, did not very completely embody the deeply rooted distrust which the nation felt for the Administration. The chair was occupied by James Moncrieff, afterwards a judge of the Court of Session, and prominent parts were played by Jeffrey, Cockburn, and Clerk, all of whom suffered personally from the domination of the Tories, and had something to hope from the triumph of the Whigs. But the speeches at the meeting found their echo in a wider audience out of doors, and a petition against the Ministry was signed with more than seventeen thousand names. The Edinburgh meeting was only one of many held all over Scotland, and no gibes or sarcasms of the Tories could hide the fact that the Government was face to face with a rising storm of popular discontent. The days of that purblind Toryism which had marked the earlier period of Liverpool's Administration were numbered, and a demand for Reform which would not be gainsaid had asserted its indubitable force.

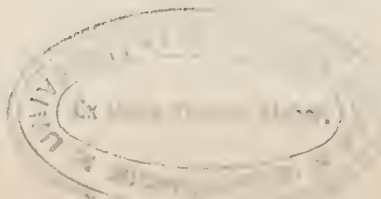
Within a comparatively narrow circle the battle was meanwhile raging fiercely. A literary war of unexampled bitterness was being carried on, and it soon proceeded to extremities, in which personal character was not spared, and from which there arose consequences revolting to the better feelings of society.

The *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood* had, as we have seen, for some years been the rallying-points of either party. But numerous more or less reputable prints took part in the fray. During the preceding century many newspapers had been established in

Scotland, and the three insignificant journals which existed at the Union had now increased by tenfold. Whatever their sympathies, however, they had scarcely assumed the guise of party organs; but in 1817 the *Scotsman* was established as the champion of the Whig party. The *Clydesdale Journal* was founded in the West of Scotland as the Tory organ; and in 1820 it began to appear in Glasgow under the name of the *Sentinel*. Its attacks on the opposite party were fierce enough, but they were outdone by those of another paper founded in 1821 under the name of the *Beacon*. Its ostensible editors were men of no position or mark, but it was supported both by the purses and the pens of men of greater weight whose contributions were secret. Its tone was truculent enough, and those attacked displayed a sensitiveness which public men have learned in later days to discard. First, Mr. James Stuart of Dunearn, who was attacked by the paper, took the law into his own hands and caned the printer in the street. A second object of vituperation, Mr. James Gibson, appealed to the Lord Advocate, who denied partnership in the concern, but admitted that he himself and others had subscribed a bond pledging themselves to be responsible for its debts. This rash admission involved many leading Tories in the squabble, and the affair went near to involving a name so honoured as that of Scott in a duel. The matter was arranged only by the withdrawal of the parties to the bond, and this virtual surrender led to the fall of the paper. But the venom of personal attacks continued with increased bitterness in the *Sentinel*. Again the man most severely attacked was Mr. Stuart of Dunearn, who was stigmatised as a coward in some verses which appeared in the paper.

His anger now led him to institute proceedings against the publishers, one of whom saved himself from an action for libel by giving up the name of the writer, who was discovered to be Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, the son of Johnson's biographer. A duel was the consequence, and in it Boswell was killed. The death of a well-known and respected member of Edinburgh society awakened men's minds to the outrages to which political bitterness might lead, and gave a certain pause to the fiercest fighters. Men of self-respect sought to dissociate themselves from such scandals, and a certain self-restraint supervened which tamed the thoughtless rancour of this guerilla warfare of the pen. But for the time the matter was judged solely on party lines. Stuart's second was the Earl of Rosslyn; that of Boswell was Mr. Douglas, afterwards Marquis of Queensberry. Stuart was no practised shot, and the issue of the duel was unexpected. Few in that day were so opposed to the practice of duelling as to consider that Stuart's action merited punishment, and the general voice of society was not against him; but none the less the trial of Stuart for murder became in reality a party struggle, and his acquittal was a triumph for the Whigs.

The Government now resorted to a means of reprisal which was at once bungling and undignified. It appeared that the two publishers of the *Sentinel* had dissolved partnership; that Borthwick—the betrayer of Boswell's name—had agreed to relinquish his property on being recouped the money value of his partnership, and although the bargain had not been completed by the payment of the price, it was thought that an action for theft might lie against



him for the abstraction of Boswell's manuscript. The action would at best have been founded upon a technicality, and however base was Borthwick's conduct —and of this no question can be raised—to indict him upon such a charge came perilously near to persecution. However that might be, the Government did not even show the courage of holding to the course which they had chosen. They vacillated, changed their tactics, and eventually abandoned the prosecution. The matter was made the subject of an animated debate in Parliament, where the conduct of the law officers was impugned by Mr. Abercromby, and a condemnatory motion was rejected by a narrow majority of twenty-five. So fierce was the spirit aroused, that the debate almost led to duels between Mr. Abercromby and the Advocate Depute, and these were prevented only by the arrest of the advocates, who were summoned to the bar of the House and compelled to make an apology.

The whole proceedings raised a ferment which it was hard to appease, and amongst other consequences they led to a bitter attack upon the powers of the Lord Advocate. That officer had by various circumstances concentrated enormous prerogatives in his hands. He exercised by prescriptive right almost all the authority of the Administration in Scotland. He represented the powers of the ancient Privy Council of Scotland; and by recent usage he joined in himself not only a large mass of legal prerogatives, but was at the same time the sole repository, so far as the Scottish people were concerned, of the power of the Crown in Scotland. The extent of his authority had long been a matter of gibe and sarcasm. On one occasion it was announced that all the great officers of State had left

in a single coach for Scotland; and after an imposing string of titles, it was added that the coach contained only one person — the Lord Advocate. But these sarcasms now became concentrated in a deliberate attack upon the office. The Whigs made this a party cry, but it had enough of speciousness to induce Sir Robert Peel, who was now Home Secretary in place of Lord Sidmouth, to make some inquiry on the subject and to ask for a report from the judges. Their report was adverse to any change, but the matter was none the less urged in the *Edinburgh Review*. One of the most strenuous advocates for a change was Henry Cockburn; but his views were modified when, at a later day, the office fell to his own party. It was a strange error of tactics on the part of the Whigs that they urged, not the substitution of a purely political officer for the Lord Advocate, but that the administration of Scotland should be centralised in the hands of the Home Secretary. It was only a part of that short-sighted policy which made them belittle the national independence of their country, and, in their fear of the influence of the Dundas family, to prefer that the symbol of that independence should be destroyed rather than that it should be in their opponent's hands. They lived to repent such tactics.

Matters such as these, however, after all only affected a comparatively small section of the population. The Opposition had, in the flowing tide of popular discontent, a lever far more powerful than that which was supplied by the petty feuds of the Parliament House. The older type of Toryism was swept away by irresistible forces stronger than those of any faction. A change came over the spirit of Lord Liverpool's Administration. The place of those who represented

only the dull and torpid weight of selfish Toryism was taken by the statesmanship of Canning and of Peel. Inert resistance was no longer deemed to be the sovereign and infallible antidote to disaffection. We have now to see the beginnings of various plans—partial indeed and imperfect, but none the less honest in intention—for removing the causes of popular discontent, and setting right the grievances by which the time was out of joint.

CHAPTER XX.

LARGER AIMS IN POLITICS AND IN THE CHURCH.

If the spirit of Castlereagh had continued to guide the Administration of the country for many years longer, the result in Scotland would have been grave. It is hard to say to what length resistance might have been pushed by the mere inert weight of a dead, unintelligent repression, in the hands of a party whose political horizon was bounded by the aim of maintaining obsolete privilege. Any substantial foundation which the Tory party possessed rested, in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, not upon its ostensible leaders, but upon a vein of sentiment and feeling which pervaded the country, and which led abler and more honest men to cast in their lot with it. That sentiment was fed upon tradition, upon distrust of the catchwords and parrot-cries of the Whig Reformers, upon patriotic zeal and the memory of a long and heroic struggle, and upon profound hatred for Revolutionary propaganda. It was not disposed to be too critical of the methods which the responsible Government followed in checking that propaganda. It respected the law and did not identify its assertion with persecution. It hated those who sought to belittle England, or who shrank from the Imperial task

which it fell to her to discharge. Above all, in Scotland it was inspired by national feeling, and detested anything which seemed to obliterate national traditions. There was in that party much which needed only enlightened statesmanship to give it force and energy, and even the boldness necessary for political advance. To such statesmanship the nation would have been ready to forgive some severity in repressive measures. But that by no means proves that it did not perceive that some reform was necessary, and that it would not have been willing to follow courageous and enlightened leaders upon a path of wise and moderate improvement of political conditions. As things were, the Tory party was uneasy and disturbed. The wisest heads in that party saw that repression might be carried too far. They perceived, only too clearly, that no one had arisen to grasp the reins that had fallen from Pitt's hands. They hated the glib and self-satisfied creed of the Whig faction, but they in their hearts distrusted still more the blindness of those who believed that Reform was to be met by an obstinate refusal to read the signs of the times.

After the death of Castlereagh the Government of which Lord Liverpool was the nominal head began to wear an aspect quite different from that which it had previously borne. Liverpool continued in office, but only because his was the most convenient name under which various elements could be grouped. His weakness could excite no jealousy. The state of matters was one which would appear strange under the rules which now operate in regard to the solidarity of a Government. We would find it difficult to imagine how Ministers divided upon essential points should continue to hold office together, and how the members

of the same Administration should be in discord over a matter so essential as that of Catholic Emancipation. But in fact the spirit of the Government had changed, and the odd divergence of its members on leading features of policy was, for the moment, no unhealthy symptom of the working of the new and more liberal ideas that were making their way slowly but surely. Peel and Canning made government in Scotland possible; the continuance of Castlereagh's influence might have converted it into another Ireland. The Cabinet now contained men whose statesmanship was founded upon principles and upon ideas, and who were not merely the representatives of a narrow and selfish clique. Their general policy was liberal in the best sense of the word. They differed upon several fundamental topics, but they were at one in the desire to redress grievances, to govern the country for the country's good, and to judge political questions by a standard altogether different from that of selfish class interest. Into the general tendency of their administration it is not our business here to enter; we have to attend only to its effect on Scottish politics.

Outwardly the change in the spirit of the Administration produced no very distinct alteration in the position of parties in Scotland. The office of Lord Advocate remained in the same hands. There was on the part of the ruling party the same unwillingness to adopt reforms without due caution, the same dislike of innovation, and, in deference to feelings which were deeply rooted in many of their supporters, the same hesitation to grant concessions which would alter the fundamental features of the Constitution. But the influence of those who resisted reform became less,

and they were compelled to admit light on one after another of the dark places of Scottish administration. A spirit was arising in Scotland, not in the narrow arena of political faction, but amongst her leading men on both sides, which was in sympathy with the higher tone of English statesmanship, and which was bringing about a new era in her administration. The struggle in the Parliament House continued with all the bitterness of selfish ambition and with all the virulence of personal animosity, but the spirit which prevailed throughout the nation was being essentially transformed.

Already, as we have seen, the venerable monument of the Supreme Court of Judicature had undergone considerable changes. It was now the subject of further modifications. The manner in which political trials were conducted had greatly improved during the last generation, and we can no longer find instances of the grim and drastic humour which travestied justice, and which alternately shocks and amuses those accustomed to the more decent procedure of modern times. But abuses still remained. Amongst these was the method of selecting juries, which left them virtually to the choice of the presiding judge. In 1821 an alteration of the law in this respect was proposed, by which the juries were to be chosen by ballot. The Bill failed in that session, but in 1822, after being opposed by the Lord Advocate, it was supported in a modified form by the Home Secretary, and by the operation of the new Act a certain number of peremptory challenges was secured to the prisoner. The proposal for ballot was again put forward in 1824, and although then defeated, it was carried, as a Ministerial measure, by the second Lord Melville. It

could not any longer be averred that the Tory party was rigidly opposed to all reform.

In the session of 1824 a Bill was introduced by the Home Secretary for a remodelling of the judicature, founded upon the report of Commissioners who had been appointed in 1823. The century so far had seen great changes in the Court of Session — the chief monument of Scottish independence, and at the same time the chief centre of time-honoured abuses. In 1808 the Court had been divided into two divisions, and the old conclave of the fifteen judges had come to an end. In 1815 juries had been introduced in civil cases. The method of choosing juries in criminal trials had quite recently been changed so as to lessen the power of the judges. Now the change was to be introduced into procedure. The Commission consisted not of Scotsmen only, but included English members, whose presence might well have excited some national prejudices. Their report was sweeping, and their recommendations, which tended to the shortening of procedure, and to greater finality of judgments, roused much searching of heart amongst those who had battened on the old abuses. Those interested against the changes were able once more to get up an apparent agitation in Scotland against the measure, and it was abandoned for the time. The next session, however, saw it placed upon the statute-book.[1]

Meanwhile other topics had again commanded attention. The question of Burgh reform was stubbornly fought on both sides. The abuses of the system were only too evident; and in 1822 the Lord Advocate was forced, in deference to the conviction on both sides that reform was necessary, to introduce a mea-

[1] 6 Geo. IV. cap 120.

sure for giving a jurisdiction over the burgh accounts to the Court of Exchequer, while leaving untouched the glaring abuse of self-election by the magistrates. Instead of appeasing, that Bill only stimulated the ardour of those who pressed for sweeping reform. The stronghold of privilege was being rudely assailed, and the days of its triumph were numbered. The larger question of Parliamentary reform, which was destined to revolutionise the Constitution, was now in the air. Whatever might be the arguments for such reform in England, they were of tenfold strength in Scotland. The wisest heads amongst statesmen might view that question with alarm, and might see in it the seeds of revolution; but they were not likely, in face of such a question, to attach undue importance to the comparatively provincial topics of minor reforms in Scotland, or to spend their force in defending abuses in which only a narrow and selfish clique were interested. One by one these abuses were assailed, and only a half-hearted defence of them was attempted. The gust of popular opinion was now blowing more freely, and was scattering the dust of long-established usage, which seemed to be venerable only because it had slumbered undisturbed so long.

When Canning became Prime Minister upon the death of Liverpool, this tendency became still more marked, and to many in Scotland it seemed as if a Whig Ministry had really taken the place of the Tories. The Lord Advocate remained the same, but the powers of this office were for the time effaced. Lord Melville, who had long exercised much of the influence which he had inherited from his more strenuous father, now ceased to do so, and Scottish business was intrusted to the new Home Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, who was

to act with the advice of three men who were avowed adherents of the Whig party — Lord Minto, Abercromby, and Kennedy of Dunure. It may be doubted whether such an arrangement, which dissipated responsibility and tended greatly to increase the pernicious influence of any factious clique, was a sound or wholesome one. It aroused a certain suspicion and distrust, but, on the whole, the Ministry of Canning commanded the support of all that was best in Scotland, and the blessings that it might have brought to the country were none the less considerable because it was not too closely identified with the triumph of the comparatively narrow Whig clique in the Parliament House, which claimed to have a monopoly of political foresight, and to be the sole defender of popular rights. Greater changes were soon to be proposed, and on the imperial question of Parliamentary reform Scotland was to be split into opposite camps, corresponding to those which divided England. But for the moment it appeared as if the keen party fights which had raged in Scotland for more than thirty years, with a bitterness in inverse proportion to the arena on which they were fought, were to be hushed in a common desire to have done with effete usage and with the worn-out lumber of political abuses. Even the contact with the large political arena of England was not without its effect in this direction, and it is noteworthy that we find Scott impressed strongly by the fact that all the little divisions which held men asunder in Scotland, and labelled them under party names, were less marked and produced less bitterness of animosity in London than upon the floor of Parliament House. Political animosity is never so keen as when it divides a profession, and is

stimulated by rival claims to the prizes of that profession; and this is precisely what happened in the legal circles of the Scottish capital.

It was this element of professional jealousy which gave a false and misleading colour to the political history of the country during the first thirty years of the present century. With the Whigs no wickedness or folly was too great to be ascribed to their opponents. It was their constant assumption—an assumption which grew to be a cardinal article of the Whig creed—that the long domination of the Tories in Scotland led naturally to the swing of the pendulum which brought power to the Whigs, long trodden under foot, but ever struggling to raise the standard of political virtue. On the side of the Whigs, we are often told, there was all the ability, all the vital energy, and all the political virtue of the nation: their opponents were wedded to privilege, and for more than a generation had owed their supremacy to nothing but the prevalence of dull routine, to the fictitious nervousness of Revolution which they were able to inspire, to the warlike enthusiasm which they kindled by the pomp and circumstance of the parade-ground, and to the fact that they were the dispensers of the loaves and fishes of promotion. These are hardly very adequate explanations when we come to examine them. It seems to be forgotten that the prevailing spirit amongst the Moderates and Tories, whatever else it was, was certainly not predominantly one of dulness and routine. On the contrary, they had managed to infect Scottish life with an almost undue spice of sprightliness and vivacity, and to shake with a surprising and refreshing roughness some very inveterate habits of routine and conventional solemnity. The displays of the parade-

ground were hardly likely to throw a glamour over the eyes of a nation not prone to scenic effect, nor were attacks on property apt to rouse undue nervousness amongst a people the great majority of whom could indulge in the proverbial laugh of the poor when confronted by the robber. The truth is that the triumph of the Moderates, who, for all practical purposes, may be said to have formed the soundest element in the Tory party, had been due to the inevitable reaction against the severe sanctimonious rule of the Covenanting spirit. Human nature could not stand such a prolonged strain, and several concurrent influences tended to encourage the reaction. Crushed, defeated, and discouraged as it was, the Jacobite leaven had nevertheless permeated the nation, and more zest was given to it by the fact that it seemed to reflect the national spirit that still chafed against the Union. A small but singularly powerful intellectual society, which cherished national traditions and was imbued with the "kindly" spirit of the Scot, made dexterous use of this prevailing feeling. The grip of the landed aristocracy on the heart of Scotland was strong, and, in spite of the selfishness and greed which often marked its economical action, it did not lose its influence by withdrawing itself from a homely sympathy with other classes, even while it retained its pride of birth and its tenacity of the privileges—sometimes the empty privileges—of rank. The strength of the Tories lay in their close sympathy with the mass of the nation, as exemplified in the character and career of such a man as Henry Dundas; and that strength was far too great to be swept away by a small political clique of smart Whig writers, who sought their allies largely to the south of the Tweed,

and who prided themselves upon being superior to the provincial prejudices of their own people. The influences which sapped the foundations of the Tory supremacy lay far deeper than that clique, and appealed by more powerful motives to the national character. These influences came from different, almost from contrary, sources. In the first place, the Tories carried down from the days of the Moderates a certain mood, half cynical and half humorous, which inevitably made them cling less closely to old prejudices. They had associated freely with the society of the English capital, and were mellowed by the association. As the danger from abroad passed away, and the tension of men's minds was less, a general softening of political asperities supervened, and the bitterness of faction became less, except within the small circle of aspiring placemen. Movements towards reform found a certain sympathy in both parties. It seemed as if a fusion might take place, and towards the close of the period of which we are treating the Government of Canning seemed to be based on such a fusion. Something else than the mere selfishness of privilege was now the motive power in politics.

But by far the most important of the influences which now began to affect Scotland was of a very different kind, and came from the religious revival. Again and again throughout the previous century the old religious spirit had attempted to reassert itself, to impose a strict system of ethics, to rekindle strong enthusiasm, to bring back the Church to the purer ideal of primitive independence, and to a stricter view of orthodox belief. Each such attempt had led, so far, not to a change within the Church itself, but to a new secession from her fold. Such secessions had not been based in

any case upon the preaching of new doctrines or upon the assumption of new liberty, but had been resolutely directed to the restoring of some old doctrine or the furbishing anew of some crumbling carved work in the pinnacles of the ecclesiastical temple. For a time, and over a restricted area in the West, the old Covenanting spirit had welcomed the religious revival as imported from England under the influence of Whitfield; but it was soon found that an invincible barrier of orthodoxy divided him from the Scottish sects, and he neither understood nor appreciated the wire-drawn subtleties upon which their religious enthusiasm rested. The religious revival was to be of Scottish growth, and was to find in Scottish soil the genius that was to give it force and influence. The descendants of the High-flying party began to reassert themselves, and, under the vigorous and racy, if somewhat boisterous and demagogic, generalship of the Reverend Andrew Thomson, they recovered much of their influence over the heart of the nation. But the main part in this new movement was to be taken by a spirit touched to finer issues and with far more expansive sympathies. The predominating influence in the Scotland of the new generation was that of Thomas Chalmers. His personality and his career are not of biographical interest alone: they were the expression of a national force—perverted indeed, and misrepresented by many of the movements to which his consummate energy gave rise, but none the less distinct in the enthusiastic support it gave to the spirit of nationality, and powerful in its personal influence. Of no man is the biography more clearly the reflection of the various phases through which the national spirit passed, and to none was it given to leave the imprint of his character more in-

delibly on the nation's history during his own generation. We may trace errors in that career, and we may regret some of its results, but it is none the less part and parcel of the nation's life, and brings no little lustre to her history.

Thomas Chalmers was born in 1780. His family had in previous generations given more than one minister of respectable position to the Church, but his father and grandfather were merchants of fair standing at Easter Anstruther in Fife, a county which has contributed not a few notable names to Scottish annals. He was one of a family of nine sons and five daughters, all educated under the patriarchal sway which was still to be found in Scottish homes, and which gave a sturdiness of character altogether unlike anything which blind parental tyranny would have inspired. His father combined with a zealous Conservatism in politics a strict adherence to the Calvinistic tenets, and an earnest cast of religious principle which in his earlier years rather galled the exuberant spirits and daring independence of his son, although it neither lessened his respect nor impaired the warmth of his affection. The temperament of that son was one of vigour and intensity; his temper was keen, his humanity and his enjoyment of life fervid and impetuous, and in his earlier years he leant towards the liberal view of ethics which characterised the Moderates. He held a vigorous attention to secular interests, and a combative assertion of secular rights, to be in no way incompatible with the proper discharge of ministerial duties. Although he early chose the clerical calling as that which attracted him most, he did not allow it to blind him to other interests, and threw himself with vigorous earnestness, and under the stimulus of a keen ambition, into the pursuit of mathe-

matical science and of literary distinction. In later days he looked back with bitter regret to what he came afterwards to regard as undue latitude of opinion and culpable laxity in religious fervour. There is nothing in the record of these early years inconsistent with a high sense of duty and a whole-hearted devotion to the sacred office; but it was combined with something which, as compared with his later attitude, seemed lax and worldly, and far beneath the lofty standard of ethics and of religious zeal which he desired to impose upon his native exuberance of temper. It is characteristic of him that, with all his keenness of intellectual effort, he found the teaching of Dugald Stewart tame and jejune, and that the calm and balanced platitudes of that professor, which a more complacent and self-satisfied majority deemed to be the products of consummate philosophical wisdom, repelled his sympathy and strained his patience. His grasp of mathematical truths and of applied science was rather vigorous and effective than profound or exact, but he brought to both an ardent imagination, which gave to these pursuits a vividness of interest that absorbed his enthusiastic energy. To his eyes they were coloured with a brilliancy and an attractiveness which they assume only for a few. It was to these pursuits that his attention was chiefly devoted, and in them that he hoped to find the best outlet for his ambition. He had early found employment in connection with the teaching of mathematics at St. Andrews University, and he was firmly resolved that his clerical calling should not interfere with his work in this field. But his popularity as a teacher—a popularity due to his marvellous powers of exposition and to the rich vein of imagination which clothed his conception of scientific truths—was resented by the

duller but more authorised representatives of the Faculty, and he found himself thrust aside with little ceremony by men to whom his genius was something of a reproach. The repulse fretted his ambition, and it assumed, in his eyes, the appearance of a slur upon his profession. His pride taught him to believe that that profession ought not to yield place, even in secular eminence, to any such ignoble jealousy, and there was no conscious personal feeling in his determined resistance to the restriction which it was sought to place upon him. He pressed his rights to the verge of insubordination, and seemed to take a delight, which might be undisciplined, but was far from ignoble, in flouting the pretensions of older and duller men. As an extra-mural teacher, he gathered audiences that shamed the University professors; and it was in the character of a champion of the Church that he stood forth as the sturdy assertor of his own independence. This phase of his life soon passed away, but it left as an inheritance a dislike and disdain of that aspect of Moderation which was, above all, dominant in the University of St. Andrews; and that dislike assumed the importance, at a later day, of a far-reaching episode in the history of the Moderate party, and as such coloured the subsequent history of his country.

He was yet a very young man when he became the ordained minister of Kilmany. From thence he went to Glasgow to be minister of the Tron Church in 1815; in 1818 he was transferred to the newly-founded parish of St. John's in that city; from there he went back to St. Andrews, in 1823, as Professor of Moral Philosophy; and in 1828 he became Professor of Divinity in Edinburgh University, where he remained until the Disruption in 1843. Such is the brief record of the outward

episodes of his career. It is rather, however, with the phases of his thought and his activity, and with the degree to which these influenced or reflected the nation's history during his generation, that we are concerned.

Chalmers at first belonged to the Moderate party in the Church, and he was, even more decidedly, a strong adherent of Conservative thought, as he conceived it. But his certainly was not the Conservatism of privilege or of reaction. He disliked Radicalism for its secular taint, for its defective appreciation of national characteristics, for its proneness to substitute socialistic methods for the individualism which his innate love of freedom craved as a necessity of his being. His Moderatism, however, was short-lived. He had been attracted to that party because it gave a wider range to clerical activity, because it asserted individual liberty, because it based the rights of the Church on the sound foundation of the law, and pressed the privileges and the independence which were hers by reason of her alliance with the State. The Moderate party had done great things for Scotland, and it found its adherents amongst the brightest intellects of the Church. It had been amply justified in its fight against what it believed to be concessions to fanaticism, and against a narrow and formal code of ethics. But Moderatism was essentially unfitted to deal with the problems of the new generation, when the rapid increase of wealth and of population was accompanied by increasing poverty and discontent, with all their baffling problems that craved solution. To all the landmarks of national history Chalmers was passionately attached—to the Church, to the Crown, to the hereditary aristocracy. They appealed to his imagination and his patriotism; they

were opposed to the doctrinaire radicalism which his soul hated, and which he thought degrading to the moral fibre; and they seemed to him in no way incompatible with that attachment and sympathy between class and class in which he placed his ideal of social happiness. A monotonous identity of rank and interest would have been distasteful to him; the hereditary distinctions enshrined to him a part of the nation's history which he would not wish to see obliterated. He would certainly not have recognised the name; he would most probably have scouted the idea; but Chalmers' political standpoint was none the less much nearer than he knew to the type that it is the fashion in our own day to classify under the name of Tory democracy—to its enemies a laughing-stock, to its friends the embodiment of a generous ideal.

It is typical of Chalmers, and it lends additional interest to his career, that he had to maintain, even when his religious opinions assumed a more sombre cast, a constant struggle against certain vigorous impulses of his nature which he dreaded as too secular. He was full of enjoyment of life; keenly alive to all its interests; drawn irresistibly into its contests; fighting for his convictions with a passionate love of the combat. In his earlier days he had been an ardent volunteer; he spoke of himself as one for whom the military career would have been most to his taste; his pulpit eloquence burst forth in almost extravagant defiances to the foreign foe who threatened our liberties, and on one occasion, we are told, he prayed that the day which saw the fall of British independence might be his last. Literary distinction was the aim of his early ambition; and the very ring of his oratory had much of the secular about it. He had a passionate

love of nature, and clothed it with a halo of romance. But with all this he was constantly on his guard against these tendencies, and suspicious of their hold upon him. The enthusiasm of his nature made him dread lest they should make the light of religious fervour burn more dimly, and perhaps also lest they should be misunderstood by his later religious associates. With no conscious dissimulation, he was nevertheless constantly inclined to find a religious motive for impulses and energies which did him no dishonour, and if he could not find it, to distrust and battle with them. The struggle did not render him less lovable or less sincere.

It was in this mood that, as his conception of duty deepened and his ideal of the clerical profession rose more high, he broke away from the Moderate party and threw himself with fervour into what he had before thought "the drivelling fanaticism" of the Evangelical school. The real distinction between him and others of his party was that he combined the new light of religious enthusiasm with an ardent conservatism. The New Light party had been in sympathy with Whiggism, and under that influence had verged towards Dissent. Chalmers' attitude seemed based on a new conception. In the ardour of his attachment to the Church and to the Constitution he knew no bounds. While he would admit no taint of latitudinarianism, he would confine himself by no narrowness of sympathy. He bated no jot of the legal privileges of the Church; but he would keep her lamp burning with a religious enthusiasm no less consuming than that of the most fervid Dissenter, inflamed with the zeal of a new-found sectarianism. It was an attitude which a few years before would have appeared absolutely impossible; that it now found such

an exponent was the chief feature of the generation. It was, of course, upon the resistless power of his eloquence that his influence chiefly rested. The echoes of oratorical prowess are apt to wax faint as the spoken word withdraws into the past, and becomes only a tradition; and we are then inclined to accuse a preceding generation of undue bias and of a lack of critical discrimination, when we recall its enthusiastic praises of the achievements of eloquence which called forth its admiration and stirred its pulse. But the testimony as to Chalmers' power is too strong to admit of doubt or cavil. Of the usual physical aids to eloquence he possessed none. His voice was poor, his accent provincial, his gesture monotonous, and even his eye lacked fire and was veiled by a heavy eyelid. The first impression upon his hearers was often unfavourable, and even when he had warmed to his theme his expressions were sometimes uncouth and harsh. How much of this was due to the unconscious art of the orator who learns to touch the chords at first with an uncertain hand and so enhances the later effect, we cannot now say. To many the eloquence of Chalmers as read, seems to have something of superficiality, and undoubtedly he essayed subjects of scientific and of philosophical interest where he had neither the learning nor the dialectic power to be more than a popular exponent whose flow of language foams with the turgidity of a shallow stream. But this need not blind us to his genius and his skill. There was something about the cast of his oratory that was peculiarly secular; at times we fancy ourselves reading a debating speech by Burke or Sheridan; the sentences at their best flow with an easy cadence, and are enriched by copious imagery and by skilful use of antithesis. Humour,

sarcasm, dexterous allusion, the keen shafts of irony and indignation, are blended in their composition; but while the qualities are there which would have commanded attention at the Bar or in the Senate, the effect and force of the whole is redoubled by the pervading power of religious enthusiasm. A pulpit orator has at all events this advantage, that, unlike other speakers, he may always rely upon the heart-whole sympathy of the vast majority of his audience. This is too apt to engender platitudes; with such genius as that of Chalmers it gives to the ring and movement of the orator the easy swing and sovereign force of an impetuous stream. It was this which gave to him unrivalled sway over his countrymen.

The chief work in which Chalmers engaged when in Glasgow, and which helped largely to decide his attitude towards the questions and parties of his time, was the attempt to solve the social problem of poverty, and of its increase alongside of advancing national wealth. He sought to give it a religious aspect. He chafed at the secular avocations which crowded upon his ministerial duties. He tried to find religious grounds for each of his theories of political economy. All this involves something of a fallacy; but in the case of Chalmers it had none of the moral weakness of a fallacy. Mistaken he might be, but the earnestness of his effort never to rest without some religious impulse to fortify his ideas, gave them a sincerity and a force in which their real value lies.

The problem with which he sought to deal was that of Poor Relief in the case of a new, a populous, and an overcrowded city parish. The Scottish system of poor relief was a matter of slow and indigenous growth. At first the only aid given to the poor was

that which rested upon certain social customs varying with each locality. In some parishes the yuletide gifts were gathered by a band of volunteer collectors, and distributed amongst the poor. There was a wide prevailing custom of mutual help. The marriage of a young couple in humble circumstances was an opportunity for levying contributions on the neighbours to establish them with the necessaries of life. To smooth the anxieties of old age the locality would contribute to provide grave-clothes, and so secure for those ending their lives the prospect of a decent burial. A class of licensed bedesmen were enrolled, and custom had given them a sanction almost equal to that of statute law. Certain days and certain hours of the day were recognised in many towns as reserved for the operations of the tolerated beggars; as long as the exactions were not unduly strained, the custom was not resented by the fairly well-to-do. As population increased, however, begging became more closely associated with crime and degradation, and there were efforts to repress it; but these efforts were often hesitating, and had to encounter some determined opposition from those who found in the old customs a relic of neighbourliness and mutual helpfulness which they would fain preserve.

So far as there was any organised administration of funds for the poor, it was in the hands of the ecclesiastical authority. In 1597 this was entrusted to the kirk-session. In 1672 there was a discretionary power given to levy an assessment; but even though the heritors were combined with the kirk-session in raising funds, their distribution rested with the latter. In the last decade of the eighteenth century the ratio of the enrolled poor—even although the

imposition of an assessment had been common for fifty years—was still very moderate. In 1791 it was only eighteen for each thousand of the population, as compared with forty-eight in England. In the first quarter of the present century it increased considerably; but there was still a widespread unwillingness to follow the lax example of England. It was only when discontent and altered social conditions forced the problem on men's attention that the necessity of action one way or another was felt. The necessity became more urgent year by year, and at length, in 1840, it forced on an official inquiry, the fruit of which was seen in the Poor Law of 1845. But by many Scotsmen that issue of the long struggle was looked upon with deep and lasting regret, as a degradation of the nation's independence, and a distinct premium upon unthriftiness and waste. The work of Chalmers in this field twenty years before this consummation was reached represents an attempt by other, and, as he conceived, higher, agencies to stave off the evil of a universal poor-rate.

This is not the place to describe with minuteness of detail the scheme by which Chalmers proposed to deal with the poor of his own parish of St. John's. The general features of the scheme are, however, of considerable interest. He based his plan on his own reading of the lessons of political economy, and if that reading was not strictly scientific, and bore—perhaps too strongly to let it serve as a gauge of the proper application of economical laws—the impress of his own emotions and his own convictions as to what was for the ultimate good of humanity, it is none the less attractive on that account. His leading aim was to trust to men themselves to work

out their own salvation, and to rescue them from outside agency which would limit their independence, restrict their liberty, and weaken their moral fibre. He detested the idea of an assessment for poor relief, and he assailed it from every side, and with the most diverse weapons. It checked the flow of generosity and of mutual helpfulness, and thus starved the best instincts of human nature. It broke with the memories of the past, and created a rough breach in the tradition of Scotland. It made men into machines, and effaced their feeling of a common brotherhood. For the benefit of the economist he urged its extravagance, as proved by the contrast between England and Scotland in the past, and by the somewhat unconvincing comparison between what his own impetuous ardour and personal influence could achieve in a single parish with what was done by official agency over the wide arena of England. It was, he asserted, false to human nature because it sought to develop character by means of a modicum of comfort, whereas character must be the starting-point, and comfort not its source but its result.

He sought to keep at a distance all official agencies, and all statutory remedies. But there was a special feature in his scheme which marks his attitude in ecclesiastical matters. He determined to work on the old parochial system, and to force each parish, which he held to be represented by the congregation of that parish, to recognise its own responsibility, and to exercise its own energy in coping with the difficulty in its midst. Chalmers' ideal would really have made of the Church congregation an ever active and powerful agency of economical administration. The Church was not merely to be a religious teacher, it was to gather

into its own hand the social organisation of the parish, and to be the motive power in its civil administration. His idea of an Established Church was not Erastian; it was not based upon any high notion of hierarchical authority; it was parochial in its essence, and he had no sympathy with the conception of the Church as a vast agency dominated by central discipline. But it was none the less an extended and ambitious scheme of ecclesiastical polity. To him the Church was not necessarily the authoritative exponent of the Truth, possessing an intrinsic claim to obedience as the guardian and divinely appointed receptacle of true doctrine; it was rather an agency for spreading the truth, to be judged and tested by the energy and learning and sincerity of its clergy — not by their ecclesiastical authority. It was to be a guide, a living influence, an ever active ally of the State, sharing in the task of economical administration, and exercising its influence in every social question. In his conception its task was a great, a proud, and a dignified one; and yet it was to achieve it, not as possessing any inherited authority, but by its own living energy. The growth of new sects, the spread of religious dissent, the rivalries that such dissent produced, Chalmers was ready to ignore. To many phases of the new sects, to much of their doctrine and many of their principles, he was in no way radically opposed, but rather hoped that they would stimulate the Church by a healthy rivalry. Other phases of religious doctrine he looked upon as distinctly wrong, but against these he would not show intolerance, not because he judged them leniently, but because he had no doubt of the ultimate triumph of the Church. If her own energy did not enable her to hold her place,

some other agency, more true to the high calling which he held to be hers, would assume the task and maintain the truth. That agency would be the most active, the most sincere, the most faithful, the most self-sacrificing : by its energy, not by its authority, it would hold its place. If the State ignored it, the loss would be that of the State, and not that of the Church. Its identity from age to age, its traditions and its inherited authority, its apostolical succession, its hierarchical claims, all these meant little to him. But a State which should ignore the religious principle was to him no State at all. That Church which was most living and most energetic, which rose most completely to the height of its task, that Church and that alone was the real palladium of the religious principle ; and for it he would claim all the endowments, all the authority which the State could confer, and all the reverence which it was bound to show. It is a peculiar ideal of a Church establishment, and one to which, perhaps, only a minority of the adherents of Church establishment in our own day would subscribe. It is doubtful whether it took sufficient account of the ever-shifting phases of the national attitude towards religion. But it was a manly and bold theory, and it served admirably to inspire his own enthusiasm, and to give earnestness to his own untiring activity and devotion.

This was the central inspiration of his own efforts in organising poor relief. The Church was to combat the ills of poverty by raising the moral standard of society. It was by its congregational agencies to be the dispenser of a free charity, from which each man would keep aloof only at his own peril. Its aid was not to be restricted to those of its own creed ; but

such liberality was to rest not upon any abstract theory as to the equal rights of all forms of belief, but upon a sure confidence that the truth must prevail, and that all variations from it were in their nature evanescent and doomed to decay.

To such a man as Chalmers, success, within the range of his own activity, was almost certain, and in his own parish, so long as he remained as its administrator, and even while the impress of his own personality as a great figure in the Scottish world was felt, that success was assured. It was in 1818 that he changed from the Tron Church, one of the old city parishes of Glasgow, to the newly established parish of St. John's. Up to that time the administration of poor relief was singularly ill-organised. There were two sources of that relief: first, the Church collection, administered, on the recommendation of the kirk-session of each Church, by the General Session, consisting of all the ministers and elders of the city. When their resources failed they were supplemented by the town hospital, which administered the legal assessment. This plan effectually crushed all independence, and it was singularly extravagant. Those who admitted the paupers to the roll, in the first instance, were responsible only for their own funds, and when these were exhausted they were able to hand on the poor whom they had placed on the pauper roll to the unrestricted purse of the town hospital. They had no motive to be strict in placing names on the pauper roll, seeing that they were responsible only for a small proportion of their cost. Such a system sapped all legitimate strictness, and produced a stream that was swollen by the laxity of the first admission, and by the ease with which the burden was handed on.

Chalmers came to a clear understanding with the Town Council—an understanding which was ratified by the Court of Session—that the poor of St. John's should be dealt with separately, and that the parish of St. John's should assume the whole responsibility for them. His first principle was the strengthening of the parochial system. With him that was hereditary, as it was, indeed, linked with all that was most characteristic of the Scottish spirit. So strongly had his father adhered to this principle that he had refused to go to a church within a stone's throw of his own parish, even when his son was to officiate in it. The parish was to him, as it was to most Scotsmen, a mere extension of the family principle—as strong in its bonds, and as supreme in its command of his affections. To Chalmers, it seemed that the most effective way of combating the difficulties of the great towns with their gathering crowds of population, and their seething social difficulties, was the parochial system that had given its impress to the country districts. The parish was to bear its own responsibilities, and was to reap the benefit of its own economies. It was to stimulate independence, to promote mutual help, to cultivate sedulously the germ of a pride of character, that grew best in the wholesome soil of neighbourly sympathy. What was saved—and much was saved—in the relief of pauperism was to be spent on the establishment of parish schools. These schools were to be cheap but not to be free; and they were to be open to all—rich and poor alike. Their object was not to be that of raising men out of their station, but that of making them worthy citizens whatever their station might be. His ideal was that of a nation where even the humblest might be enriched by what was more than outward wealth—where in-

tellectual pleasures were to be the common inheritance of all—not a mere machinery for the redress of social inequalities. These last Chalmers held of comparatively small moment, and he regarded their abolition as the daydream of whimsical theorists. His object was, as he himself put it, "not to raise men in the artificial scale of life, but to raise them on that far nobler scale which has respect to the virtues of mind, and the prospects of immortality. It is to confer a truer dignity upon each than if the crown of an earthly potentate was bestowed upon him." It might suit political theorists to speak of this as a Utopia; to the mind of Chalmers it was a real and practical aim, which his own earnestness and enthusiasm enabled him to foresee in vivid realisation.

But, alas for the ultimate success of his scheme, and for the hopes of Scotland, the current of feeling and of political party was all against him. For a time the scheme succeeded. Its economy was amazing. The poor-law administration of the district, which had before cost £1400 a year, sank to £280, and it was not only easily met by the congregational funds, but left a handsome surplus out of which schools were established on a flourishing foundation, and the crying evil of the city—its fall from the high ideal of Scottish education—was successfully fought. The scheme met with keen opposition and with untiring ridicule; but its enemies were forced at last to resort to the theory that its success depended only on his own genius and his indomitable power of organisation. A Chalmers was not to be found in every parish: his very success was a reproach to his more lukewarm brethren, and the conviction slowly spread that a remedy for the evils of a new state of society must be sought by the more mechanical and

prosaic methods of legislation. Before his death—when Chalmers had drifted into other controversies, and had become the leader of the movement which was to deal the Church of his enthusiasm the most deadly blow that she had ever suffered—the necessity of a legal assessment for the poor was fully admitted and had become an essential part of the constitution. Staggering under the disaster of the Disruption, the Church could no longer hope to fulfil the function which he had so proudly claimed for her; and his own hand had dealt the blow to which her weakness and her crippled powers were due.

Powerful as he was as a party leader, and strongly as he impressed himself upon the life of the nation, Chalmers to a certain extent stood alone, and we are often struck by the fact that his associates shared only a portion of his spirit, and were his allies only in a fragment of the scheme which he made his ideal, and which was so rich in promise for Scotland. He broke away from the Moderate party; but he retained, in all its force, the pride which had belonged to the Moderate party in the previous generation, and which had made the Church, as conceived by them, the influential ally of the State, screened off from no secular interest, and claiming a leading part in all agencies for good. The Evangelical party impressed him strongly, and perhaps affected him with an undue measure of what to its enemies appeared sanctimoniousness: but even when he spoke most strongly with the tone of the Evangelical, he did not bate one jot of his desire that the Church should take a lead in literature and in learning. He was surrounded by many to whom such things had a tincture of secularism, and who were ready to condone feebleness and unctuousness for the sake of the fervour

of their religious enthusiasm ; but his own spirit was not tamed to conformity with such a view. No one felt more strongly—even though at times he seemed to recoil from the feeling—that religion might make a bad man good, but could not make a weak man strong.

There was a vigorous solidarity in Chalmers' opinions, even when they seemed to bring him into contact with diverse parties. With his Evangelical fervour, he retained something of the old spirit of the Moderates. He distrusted above all, that which supplemented individual effort and independence by formal or mechanical aids. With the Whigs, he opposed the Corn Laws ; but it was not because, like them, he thought the Corn Laws unjust in their aim, or unduly favourable to the agricultural interest, but because he thought them an attempt to do by legislative means what should have been left to the operation of natural laws. With the Tories, he opposed Parliamentary reform ; but not because he feared that Parliamentary reform would destroy privilege ; rather because he thought that political weight should follow, and should not precede, worth and education, and because he did not choose that the constitution should be at the mercy of an unjudging mob. He was no worshipper of rank ; but he looked upon hereditary distinctions as landmarks in the nation's history, and as the expression of her traditions. No man assailed more vigorously a craven fear of authority ; but no one in Scotland had his enthusiasm more stirred by the visit of George IV., which seemed to revive something of the old spirit of Scottish loyalty. The democratic spirit was strong in him, but he was repelled by the impiety as well as by the iconoclasm of the political agitator, and strove to dissociate his own efforts at social reform from any sympathy with the

violence of reforming zeal. There was no more devoted Scotsman, no more keen presbyterian; but his whole spirit was attracted by the learned dignity and by the ornate ritual of the Anglican Establishment. He was the ardent supporter of her rich endowments, and he owned with her a sympathy to parallel which we must go back to the days of Robertson and Carlyle. "We hold it," he says in a burst of admiration of the Anglican Church, "we hold it a refreshing spectacle at a time when meagre socinianism pours forth a new supply of flippancies and errors, when we behold an armed champion come forth in full equipment from some high and lettered retreat of that noble hierarchy." "Sir," he said on another occasion, when an opponent of ecclesiastical endowments was decrying the vast revenues of the Bishopric of Durham, "if all that has been received for the bishopric since the foundation of the See were set down as a payment for Butler's 'Analogy,' I should esteem it a cheap purchase."

As a parish minister Chalmers might have continued to exercise a powerful influence on social questions in Scotland during the decade from 1820 to 1830, and might have won for the Church a decisive part in the development of the nation. It is matter of regret that in 1823 he broke away from that position, and chose the more leisured post of Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews. It was in pulpit eloquence that his strength chiefly lay, and the gain to literature by his leisure was but small. Worse than that, his leisure involved him more closely in the discussions of the Church Courts, and in the heated atmosphere of these scenes his more free and independent ideals had less scope. Let us see how the contests on which he now entered shaped his course and forced him step

by step into an attitude which was widely separated from that which he held as one who sought to make the Church play a lofty part as social regenerator on Conservative lines.

In the same year in which Chalmers transferred his energies from Glasgow to St. Andrews, he took a prominent part in a controversy in the Church Courts which marked the advance of a new spirit in the Church. The Moderate party had always vindicated for the Church and her clergy the right to take a large part in secular and, above all, in literary work. They looked upon this as likely not only to contribute to her dignity, but to liberalise her spirit. They dreaded — perhaps with exaggerated fear — a too exclusive absorption in ecclesiastical interests or in religious occupations, and thought that the influence of the Church was enhanced by the enlargement of the horizon of her clergy, and by this opportunity of their attaining a better competence than was provided by the limited resources of their parochial charges. This failing had led them to favour pluralities, and to resent any self-denying ordinance by which ministers should be debarred from adding parochial charges to other offices. The Evangelical spirit which was now re-asserting itself, and which represented, in a modified form, the old spirit of the High-flyers, or (as they were called when their tenets were even more pronounced) the "Wild" party, was strongly opposed to this, and resented the intrusion of secular engagements upon the attention of those selected for parochial charges. In the year 1823 this controversy was sharply exercised over the case of Dr. Macfarlane, who, being Principal of Glasgow University, was nominated by the Crown to one of the charges of the High Church

of Glasgow. The Presbytery refused to give effect to the presentation, and the matter ultimately came before the Assembly, where Dr. Chalmers, who had drifted far from the views of his earlier days, took a prominent part in supporting the decision of the Presbytery. The Assembly confirmed the presentation ; but although defeated for the time, the Evangelicals managed to show that their strength in the Church was enormously increased.

That party was now led with great ability, and almost superabundant energy, by Dr. Andrew Thomson, of St. George's Church, Edinburgh. He was endowed with all the qualities most effective in debate, with a strong flow of humour, amazing eloquence of a rough sort, great powers of sarcasm, and a readiness in strategy which would have gained for him undisputed eminence even on the larger arena of St. Stephen's. Besides all this, he was a man of undaunted courage, and unresting vigour, and his high fame as a pulpit orator, added to the social popularity which his genial wit and buoyant spirits won for him, made him unquestionably a leader, not in the Church only, but in every secular business of the metropolis. Of the higher traits of Chalmers' genius, of his imagination, his romance, his lofty chivalry — Thomson possessed nothing. But the partnership of the two was invincibly strong. None of the Moderate leaders could be placed in comparison with these two, and for the few years that remained to Thomson the friendship between them was one of intense and unabating warmth.

In 1825 the discussion on pluralities was renewed. Chalmers was the chief spokesman for the Evangelical opposition, and his speech marks, as clearly as any

other circumstance, the contrast between his earlier and his later attitude. An admirable opportunity for a passage of most effective eloquence was given by a maladroit debater, who quoted an early and anonymous pamphlet, known to be from Chalmers' pen, in which he had asserted, in opposition to Playfair, who sought, on grounds quite different from the Evangelicals, to exclude the clergy from university appointments, that his own experience proved to him "that after the discharge of his parochial duties, a minister could have five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science in which his taste might dispose him to engage." Chalmers rose to the occasion. In well-chosen language he admitted the authorship of the twenty-years-old pamphlet. He had hoped "that it was mouldering in silence, forgotten and disregarded." He was deeply grateful to the gentleman who had given him an opportunity for a public recantation. He offered himself "a repentant culprit before the bar of this venerable Assembly." He had written the pamphlet, stung by what he thought a slight on the clergy of the Church, and he had maintained that devoted attention to the study of mathematics was not dissonant to the proper habits of a clergyman. "Alas! sir, so I thought in my ignorance and pride. I have now no reserve in saying that the sentiment was wrong, and that, in the utterance of it, I penned what was most outrageously wrong. Strangely blinded that I was! What, sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But, *then*, sir, I had forgotten two magnitudes —I thought not of the littleness of time—I recklessly thought not of the greatness of eternity."

With these words, Chalmers marked not for himself only, but for his Church, a vast change of attitude which powerfully affected the whole country. The old spirit which had prevailed in the last half of the eighteenth century, and which extended far into the present, was passing away. Stripped of some of their exaggerations, without those absurdities which had moved the sarcasm, not of the opponents of the Church alone, but even of such of her clergy as Dr. Alexander Carlyle—but not perhaps altogether without some of the old fierceness of ecclesiastical rancour, the Evangelicals were again coming to the front. It was not given to all to blend the new spirit with the broad genius and rich humanity of Chalmers, or with the genial buoyancy of Thomson. But unquestionably the future, for a time, was to lie with that new party, which seemed also to be in sympathy with the new spirit dominating English politics, and awakening an echo also in the political aspirations of the best Scotsmen of the day.

During these years Chalmers continued to mingle in other than ecclesiastical controversies. He still fought with vigour against the proposals for extending an assessment for the poor. He still resented all unnecessary interference of the State. The socialism he advocated was to be Christian. But his Christian socialism was not to be a system by which, in accordance with the theory fashionable in our own day, Christianity is to be made the basis of a vast network of legislative interference. It was to be a work of the Church, not merely in its conception, but in its operation, and was to be enforced by religious—nay, by ecclesiastical—sanction. It was essentially the same motive that made him welcome the repeal, by Canning

and Huskisson, of the laws against combinations of workmen, while he protested with equal vehemence against any extension of such combinations as would limit in any way the freedom of the individual workman. From the strenuous assertion of individual freedom he never wavered, however much his position changed in regard to other disputes.

In 1828 Chalmers quitted St. Andrews, where he had resented the prevalence of the old Moderate spirit, and where he had done his best to stir the embers of a religious revival, for Edinburgh, where he was appointed Professor of Divinity. In 1829 we find him taking a prominent part in support of the Catholic Relief Bill, which was then being promoted by the Tory Government of Peel and Wellington.

In that year a great meeting was held in Edinburgh in support of the Bill, and the most prominent members of both political parties took part in it—an instance of communication which was almost unexampled, and which was all the more strange, when we recall what had been the violence of opposition to any semblance of such relief on the part of the Evangelical party or their predecessors in 1780, when their advocacy of the removal of disabilities had well-nigh cost the Moderates their power in Scotland. Chalmers' advocacy of emancipation was bold, and he brought to its service all his eloquence. But it is permissible to doubt whether it was based on altogether logical grounds, or whether it embraced a conception of religious liberty which would satisfy the more ardent supporters of that very indefinite term. Chalmers avowedly supported Catholic Relief, as a means of injuring Catholicism, and with the hope that it might sap the foundations of that creed. Such confidence was based on a singular want of political fore-

sight, and it involved a species of toleration which the Catholics might not unreasonably resent. Doubtless it was sincere; but symptoms are not wanting which show that Chalmers had in his later years some doubt whether the secure confidence which he then expressed was altogether justified by facts and results.[1]

But with 1830 a new epoch opens. The political world saw a reversal of long-cherished theories, and a transfer of influence from one party to another which was paralleled by that in the Church. We have now to see how these two streams advanced for a time apart, and then gradually coalesced. In this sketch of Chalmers' work, we have sought to show how, typified by him and stirred by his surpassing influence, a new spirit pervaded Scottish life, and helped to enlarge the national view of social and political questions. It was a spirit confined to no one party, and of which the credit cannot be assumed by any political clique, however active and self-assertive.

[1] See Life, by Dr. Hanna, vol. iii. p. 259. "I have been candidly informed," says his biographer and son-in-law, "that when spoken to about the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill, not long before his death, he said it was a historical blunder." The gloss which Dr. Hanna puts upon this does not materially alter its purport or effect.

CHAPTER XXI.

1830 TO 1834.

WE have seen two influences which were gradually, but profoundly, changing the course of politics in Scotland. In place of the older and more narrow Toryism of Castlereagh, built upon a fear of revolution which old memories of national danger kept alive, and stimulated by all the selfishness of privilege, there was now a new spirit which aimed at reconstructing the political machine to the new needs of the time, inspired by high hopes and guided by wise and thoughtful statesmanship—a spirit to which Peel and Canning, each in his different way, mainly contributed. That spirit was no monopoly of a Whig faction; for the moment, indeed, many of those who represented it with greatest distinction belonged to the Tory and not to the Whig party. The same influence extended to Scotland, which had her full share in the larger motives of the age; and far beyond the little clique that clung round the *Edinburgh Review*, and fancied itself the sole hope of political regeneration, it aroused sympathy amongst Scotsmen of light and leading. In its popular phase—because it had a popular phase—that spirit received a powerful stimulus from the wave of religious revival that was passing over Scotland,

and it is impossible to deny that even in the ecclesiastical disputes to which that revival soon gave rise, and which we shall presently have to examine, the new movement received some additional impetus. But it does not follow that the older spirit of Scottish Toryism, which did not rest upon privilege alone, but was based largely on venerated traditions and on keen national feeling; which was honestly distrustful of innovation, and which had no sympathy with the religious revival, so alien to the older spirit of Moderatism; which had something of romance in its composition, and felt an aversion to the modern maxims of the economist and the doctrinaire—it does not follow that this spirit was entirely dead. The great luminary, whose magic hand had made the spell of Scottish romance potent all over Europe, was wedded to the older views. Scott was indeed no adept in political science. His opinions were not those of any party, but exclusively his own. They were coloured by the poetry of his nature, and, while they had something of the free-lance which it was his nature to be, their very intensity of conviction, and their loyalty to old, and above all to national, traditions, gave them a halo of chivalry which puzzled and perplexed the lesser men around him. The very tenacity of his friendships, and his loyalty to the names of the past, made smaller men criticise and carp at that which they did not understand. His geniality and breadth of character prevented him from feeling any very strong sympathy with the enthusiasm of religious feeling that seemed to swathe human morality in the swaddling bands of a somewhat unctuous and obtrusive code of religious ethics. We have heard, by oral tradition, a characteristic saying of Scott's to a lady who confessed that,

in an age of increasing strictness, she sometimes indulged in the more innocent social pleasures—"It is refreshing, madam, nowadays to find a lady who is no better than she ought to be." His political ideals—and, after all, no ignoble ones—were Pitt and Henry Dundas; and he found no such men amongst his new contemporaries. The Whigs were to him the descendants of the old Jacobins; and even where he saw the necessity for change he was not disposed to entrust the process of change to their unhallowed hands and irreverent methods. He was still to make a doughty fight for Scottish privilege, and to wield a lance against principles which seemed likely to increase the influence of his lifelong foes.

That fight was waged on the unlikely field of currency reform. In such a field Scott had little honour to gain, and it can hardly be maintained that he was fitted either by nature or by training to be a calm or dispassionate judge in such a dispute. But he had many points on his side, and even less enthusiastic maintainers of Scottish privileges than Scott might well have been stirred to combat in such a cause. The Scottish bankers were able and on the whole cautious men. We have seen the growth of the Scottish system; how admirably it had been adapted to the needs of the country; how free it was from the unwholesome monopoly which had been the bane of English banking; and how few comparatively had been the serious disasters which had marked its free development. But however able in business Scottish bankers might be, they were hardly possessed of those gifts of sarcasm and of humour which could give vogue and popular form to their contentions. It was a godsend to them when Scott sharpened his sword

for the fight and descended into the controversial arena in a mood that brooked no surrender. His opponents had undoubtedly some strong arguments to back their proposals. The reckless speculation which was characteristic of the time gave only too much ground for the economists to raise questions as to the soundness of the financial position of the country; and a check upon the paper currency became urgent. But the urgency was mainly a matter which concerned England. It was pressed largely in the interests of that monopoly, which had made of English banking an artificial system resting upon legislative nostrums. Had the proposed restriction been confined to England, no objection would have been raised. But the newest reformers were wedded to the notion of uniformity. They could not tolerate any anomaly, on whatever historic basis, or whatever national predilection, it might rest. Amongst their proposed reforms they included the curtailing of the power of Scottish banks to issue £1 notes. Unfortunately, by habit, by motives of convenience, by all the conditions under which its commercial operations had grown out of the most unpromising beginnings, Scotland clung to these notes with an almost passionate attachment. The proposal to abolish them roused the keenest resentment; and the resentment required only a powerful champion to give to it the importance of a national dispute.

Scott was no uncompromising Tory. His sound common-sense made him perfectly able to discern when resistance to change might be exaggerated, and when concession was wise. "Tory principles," we find him saying in his Diary in 1825, after attending a festal gathering of the adherents of the cause, "were rather

too violently upheld by some speakers." "There are repairs in the structure of our constitution," he says in the same Diary less than two years later, "which ought to be made at this season, and without which the people will not long be silent." These were not the words of an uncompromising enemy of change. But the threatened curtailment of Scottish privileges roused him to resistance to what he deemed an unworthy concession to the doctrines of the economists by the Tory Government; and in a mood of passionate anger which he seldom showed, he stood forth as the whole-hearted defender of the existing state of things. His own recent financial misfortunes seemed to sting him into even greater bitterness of resentment, and to confirm him in a determination to prove himself independent of all political parties. His fight for Scottish privileges was carried on, not against a Whig Government, but against Canning and his friend Lord Melville, the son of his early patron, Henry Dundas. In three letters which he issued under the signature of "Malachi Malagrowther," he roused a storm of anger against the proposal which stirred the national spirit of his country, moved the animosity of the economists, and effectually deterred the Ministry from the proposal. The Scottish notes were preserved, and continued to form the main part of the currency. It requires no long memory to recall the time when sovereigns were taken in their place only with reluctance and suspicion; and even now, in many parts of Scotland, while the suspicion of specie payments has disappeared, inveterate and traditional habit still makes the greasy and begrimed notes a more grateful and congenial medium.

For the political aspect of the struggle Scott had

little care. "From year's end to year's end I have scarce a thought of politics," he says; but the "late disposition to change everything in Scotland to an English model" roused his patriotic zeal to the boiling-point; he "rejoiced to see the old red lion ramp a little, and the thistle again claim its *nemo me impune*." He was glad to find that "Malachi reads like the work of an uncompromising right-forward Scot of the old school." He knew that old friendships would be risked; but he regretted that the Scottish managers were lukewarm to the fight, and despised the cautious timidity of their subservience to English ideas. "Ah, Hal Dundas," he writes, "there was no truckling in thy day!" He rejoiced to find that once more Scotland was ready to respond to an appeal made to her national instincts; and no thought of the consequences held him back. He foresaw what it meant for himself; but his only regret was that those whom he had counted as his friends did not share his own enthusiasm.

The fight, hot and keen while it lasted, had some serious consequences. It made of Scott a far more confirmed opponent of concessions, and ranked him far more decidedly, for the few years that remained of his life, on the side of what seemed a party of stern and uncompromising resistance to change. This attitude of angry contempt for the new political nostrums that were rife became part and parcel of his stern fight against the misfortunes that clouded his later days.

The apparent compromise of principle that brought Canning close to the Whigs in 1827 was viewed by Scott with strong suspicion. He did not see—perhaps did not wish to see—that a new spirit, powerfully affecting Scotland, was creeping into politics. Mean-

while he distrusted the alliance, because he feared that it might bring about a sweeping measure of Parliamentary Reform, which he conceived as inevitably the precursor of revolution. This was no proof of a narrow spirit on Scott's part; it only showed that in his last years he clung to the ideas that had been accepted as part of the national creed in his earlier days, and could not shake himself free from the traditions of his life. There was much that was singularly prophetic in his forecast of his own nation's destinies. He did not deceive himself as to the tendency of popular opinion. "The whole burgher class of Scotland," he writes to Sir Robert Dundas in 1826, "are gradually preparing for radical reform—I mean the middling and respectable classes; and when a burgh reform comes, which cannot perhaps be long delayed, ministers will not return a member from the towns. The gentry will abide longer by sound principles: for they are needy, and desire advancement for their sons, and appointments, and so on. But this is a very hollow dependence, and those who sincerely hold ancient opinions are waxing old." Whatever Scott's opinions might be, there is no question but that he held them sincerely. To one thing he clung with all the tenacity of a romantic spirit: that was the supreme value to Scotland of her own national distinctiveness. He dreaded a constant series of legislative changes, conceived, as he deemed them to be, on artificial lines. "Scotland," he writes to Croker, "completely liberalised, as she is in a fair way of being, will be the most dangerous neighbour to England that she has had since 1639. . . . If you *unscotch* us, you will find us damned mischievous Englishmen. The restless and yet laborious and constantly watchful

character of the people, their desire for speculation in politics or anything else, only restrained by some proud feelings about their own country, now become antiquated, and which bald measures will tend much to destroy, will make them, under a wrong direction, the most formidable revolutionists who ever took the field of innovation."

He distrusted the Whig tendencies of the Government; and when Canning died, only a few months after he had become Prime Minister, Scott thought that all his wit and eloquence, all his ambition and his debating power, had been wasted in a hopeless attempt to conciliate irreconcilable views. He saw how helpless and evanescent was the figment of power in the hands of that "transient and embarrassed phantom" (as Disraeli describes him), Lord Goderich; and he hailed with equal respect, if not with equal cordiality, as a relief from such feeble shuffling, the leaders of the opposite parties, who knew their own minds and stooped to no compromises—the Duke of Wellington and Earl Grey. Meanwhile he contemplated, if not with sympathy, at least with no active misgiving, the movement towards Catholic Emancipation in 1829; and although he was not one of those who attended the great meeting in Edinburgh—where both sides were represented—in favour of that measure, he yet was prepared to welcome it as justified by the circumstances of the time.

Scott's dread of reform was, then, a feeling prompted by ardent love of the past, and not by any unwillingness to redress abuses. And for the bulk of the nation, a new spirit of compromise had dawned. Parliamentary Reform did not yet seem so near as it really was. Its discussion did not yet produce the bitterness of feeling

which it was shortly to call forth: and so far as other topics were concerned, the political parties seemed to be coming closer together. The last twenty years had seen great changes. It was no longer the fashion to hush all talk of reform, and to treat it as the certain precursor of revolution. New ideas were rife; new interests were making themselves felt: and the nation was prepared to touch abuses with a bolder hand. A new sense of social duty had asserted itself; and the absorption of power by a privileged territorial class was no longer possible. In 1829 Jeffrey was elected Dean of Faculty, which proved that political feeling was not strong enough to keep a prominent Whig out of the position of first representative of a profession, the majority of which held political opinions the very reverse of his. It is true that, as a concession to the generosity of his opponents, and as a becoming recognition of the responsibilities of the position, Jeffrey ceased to be editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. But the election made it clear that the party he represented had attained to a position far different from that which it held when he started the *Review*, seven and twenty years before, as one of a hopeless and hated minority. The question of Parliamentary Reform necessarily made a dividing mark between Whig and Tory. But for the moment that question was a speculative one, and the Tory party had lost its high pretensions and modified the rigidity of its creed, and many of its members were not unwilling to aid in the work of social regeneration.

The new spirit found, as we have said, a powerful ally in the Church. Under the guidance of such a man as Chalmers—Conservative in his principles, but none the less the friend of many of the Whigs, and

associated with them in many of their schemes—the Church had been animated with a greater zeal, and was roused to greater keenness in grappling with the problems which with increasing urgency were demanding solution in a society rendered more complicated by the increase of wealth and the shifting of the old landmarks. The old traditions were passing away; the old social order was becoming a memory of the past; and the old political distinctions were being obliterated. The Tory and the Whig parties still kept up their contest; but it was largely personal, and largely concerned with the tenure of office and of power—things which touch only a few. The interest of a large part of the most energetic and active in Scottish life was occupied with her expanding commerce and her increasing wealth; for the rest the absorbing topic lay in ecclesiastical politics. Literature and philosophy ceased to be, as for a large part of the previous century they had been, the chief interests of the educated classes. The fervid assertion of Scottish nationality and the taste for Scottish antiquities, only a short time before so fashionable, now engaged the attention of none but a select few. The outburst of poetry and romance which had been so rich in the generation that had passed since 1790, lost its strength and faded into secondary importance.

The one most distinctive symptom of the mood of Scotland in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was the recrudescence of a new type of religious revivalism, coming to lay a chilling hand upon the buoyancy that had made the last century so attractive, to impose new maxims of conventional ethics upon habits that were genial even to laxity, and to forge new fetters upon the easy latitudinarianism that had long

been the dominant characteristic of Scottish thought. Without due attention to that new symptom, we cannot understand the phase which Scottish life now assumed.

The Evangelical party had now become distinctly the most powerful in the Scottish Church. It was a party whose characteristics we may not all find to be uniformly attractive, but it had gained much in attaching to itself such a man as Chalmers, the strongest personality in Scotland at this time. He was not moulded very closely on the lines of the Evangelical party, as these are ordinarily drawn. In early life he had leant, as we have seen, to the Moderates; and to the last, more than perhaps he himself knew, his temperament was not alien to Moderatism and to all that it implied. His conception of the Church was that of a great steadying force in society—vigorous, powerful, lettered, and not without a dignified pride. The conservatism which he had inherited from his father, combined with the strength and impatience of folly and of cant which were of the essence of his character, made him unwilling that his Church should bend to mob-rule or truckle to ignorant fanaticism. In this he reflected the feelings of the Moderates. But Moderatism had the defects of its qualities. It stood aloof from popular religious movements. A certain coldness, indifference, and want of earnestness—which became all the more marked as its more able leaders passed away, and only a few were left to represent its higher traditions—repelled a temperament so impulsive, so forcible, and so sincere as that of Chalmers. As his sympathy with the Moderates waned, his conception of the Church became modified, and he schooled himself to look with less impatience on the more

strict tenets of Evangelicalism. To him the Church was still to be dignified, lettered, independent; but she was to be a missionary Church, working mainly for the poor, taking upon herself the burden and charge of poor relief, dominating all political movements by maintaining the supremacy of character and religious conviction as the engines by which the lot of the poor was to be bettered. The Church and the nation were to be one and indivisible; and this granted, he was ready to accord a half-contemptuous toleration to creeds that were outworn, and to extend a hand of brotherhood to sects that were divided from the Church only by small distinctions. In 1831 there had come a curious doctrinal phase amongst one section in the Scottish Church, which decried the stalwart rigour of Calvinism and preached a sort of universalist creed; and which, more strangely still, even through the teaching of educated, high-minded, and cultivated men, attempted to bolster up that creed by a strange farrago of miraculous tales of the renewal of the gift of tongues. It was a symptom—albeit in a feverish and excited form—of the general wave of intensified religious feeling that was passing over the country; but though viewed with compassion rather than anger by such a man as Chalmers, it was summarily expelled from the Church as an unsound and unhealthy manifestation. Its representative was Mr. Macleod Campbell, minister of Row, a man whose character stood high, whose religious convictions were of the purest and most enthusiastic type, and who continued for more than a generation later to command the affection and veneration of a large number of his countrymen. He was now deposed from the ministry, and harsh as the measure was by many deemed to be,

it had the tacit sympathy of Chalmers. According to his notions, however desirable it was to encourage religious zeal, that zeal must be tempered by common sense and restrained by ecclesiastical discipline. Chalmers had drifted before this date, far indeed from the older Moderatism, but we must not overlook the element which he inherited from the Moderates. Like them, he never bated any of the Church's privileges. Like them, he never looked upon her as the mere tolerated *protégée* of the State. He never identified her with resistance to constituted authority, and never sought to make her the ally of democratic aims. She was to be a patriot Church, working for the people, but independently of the people, building up a higher tone of morality and a higher ideal of social duty, but careful not to associate herself with the political party who were claiming a monopoly of reforming zeal and of patriotic virtue. He viewed with coldness, if not with positive dislike, the political nostrums of the day, and if he was democratic in his aims and in his missionary zeal, he had as yet certainly no wish to be democratic in his methods.

Chalmers thus invested, with more of religious zeal, aims which lay at the root of much in the tenets of the Moderates of the previous generation. They too had preached the theory of an independent and a powerful Church. They too had endeavoured to make the Church an engine of social amelioration, and of increased intelligence and education. Like Chalmers, they had clung to Scottish traditions, and had looked with pride to the part the Church had taken in winning for Scotland a high place in literature. But they had become too exclusive in their alliance with one political party. In this they were false to their own

traditions, and sorely did they pay the penalty; it narrowed their range and led directly to their downfall. Chalmers rescued much that was valuable in their tenets, but he left their spirit behind him, when he was caught by that religious revival which their coldness and indifference, amounting almost to sarcasm and irony, had done much to provoke. The earnestness of that religious revival, the repressive chill which it cast on much that was most attractive in Scottish social life, drew the two parties widely apart. Earnestness led to enthusiasm, enthusiasm to fanaticism, and fanaticism to something which its opponents might not unfairly call Pharisaical pride. Those who clung to the older party met the revival with sarcasm and ridicule, looked askance on the perfervid outbursts of religious zeal, and openly defied the strict rule which was intruding itself again, with something of Covenanting memories, into the code of minor social ethics. They claimed to represent the literature, the wit, the romance, and the poetry of Scotland; and the Evangelical school were thus driven into a mood that viewed with suspicion all that was secular, and identified religion with something that its enemies called sanctimoniousness.

Chalmers, in his own eyes and those of his contemporaries, was now a devout adherent of the Evangelical school. But by the deeply-rooted conservatism of his nature, by the force of his historical imagination, by that romantic impulse which was stronger in him than any party creed or shibboleth, by the manly vigour which could not be divorced from his utterances and his acts, he held no small tincture of the better phase in the spirit of the older party in the Church. From that party he broke away because it had become

cold, apathetic, and indifferent. It had lost its old fire and freedom; it had lost something of its national tradition. In its highest form it had achieved much for Scotland, and had given to her a proud position in the intellectual world. But it had lost its attraction for many of the best Scottish spirits, and the reaction brought a tide that swept Chalmers with it. His later ecclesiastical fights and the associations into which these led him carried him far indeed—and carried his country still further—from the ideals that had once been his. He became, in spite of himself, and he did all he could to make his Church, democratic not in aim only but in methods. That Church did not pass through the dust and turmoil of the fray without carrying away marks of the battle. It grew narrow and cross-grained in the process of asserting, with uncompromising rigidity, a position that became every day more palpably illogical. Its unbending sternness in denouncing all who questioned that position, inevitably impressed upon it a character of self-righteous complacency, and almost compelled it to assume that Pharisaical attitude which it often came to wear in private life and morals, and which it only slowly dropped as the bitterness of contention became less. Chalmers did not himself become a political partisan, but he bequeathed to that large section which, under his guidance, broke away from the Scottish Church, a spirit that for a generation at least was the mainstay of Scottish Whiggism.

By 1830 Chalmers had taken an active part in many ecclesiastical fights in the General Assembly. By means of these fights the Evangelicals had gradually won back the supremacy which they had lost so long. By the death of Dr. Andrew Thomson in

1831 Chalmers became the recognised leader of that party. But this made no alteration in his ostensible attitude towards political parties in the State. He still remained a steady Conservative in politics, opposed to Parliamentary Reform, distrustful of State interference with the individual, viewing with profound distrust the political nostrums of the day. How was it that this gulf was bridged over, and that those who stood in many respects so far apart—the Whigs and the newer party in the Church—came to join hands?

For many years before 1830 the Whigs were hopelessly shut out from power. The very hopelessness of their case made their tenets more extreme. They were compelled to show toleration to those more daring spirits who contemplated revolutionary methods. They protested with all the vehemence of a powerless and therefore irresponsible party against the efforts of administration to preserve society against assaults. They denounced these efforts as attempts to curb liberty and to impose tyrannical rule. They had looked to very little help from the national Church and its adherents, and had been compelled to defend the utterances of those who attacked established creeds as well as established political authority. The Radicals had often attacked religion as the submissive servant of authority, and the Whigs could not safely repudiate the Radical propaganda. But this cost them much in the eyes of Scotsmen, who clung with inherited affection to their Church, and were jealous of any attempt to undermine the purity of her doctrine. Nothing is more striking than Chalmers' identification of political agitation with irreligious propagandism during the decade from 1820 to 1830; and so long as the two

were identified in his mind, he could show no sympathy with either. But as time went on the Whigs came within measurable distance of power, and, as it approached, power created a sense of responsibility. The organs of the Whigs began to speak with more respect of religion. The changes which they advocated became more definite and more restricted. Reform became more and more distinguished from revolution. The Whigs, by anticipation, began to look on themselves as likely soon to assume the responsibilities, the anxieties, the burdens of administration. They drew farther and farther away from the Radicals. They began, perforce, to study those tactics by which a position might be defended, as well as those by which a stronghold might be assailed. As the crisis of the struggle approached more closely, their policy became more cautious and more deliberate, and they were drawn into closer relations with the leaders of that party in the Church which had fought the Moderates when the Moderates were identified with the Tories.

But the alliance did not come yet. The Whig party was scarcely animated by a spirit likely to make it feel any very strong sympathy with religious zeal or enthusiasm. In the fight for Parliamentary Reform Chalmers maintained a firmly Conservative attitude. When the windows in Edinburgh were illuminated on the passing of the Reform Bill, Chalmers refused to join, and as a consequence had the windows of his house broken by the mob. It is, indeed, odd to find him, after the Reform Act was passed, regretting it as likely to throw legislative power into the hands of men of business to the exclusion of men who have *leisure* for study and reflection; and quoting Ecclesiasticus on the danger of entrusting with the arcana of govern-

ment men whose hearts and hands are full of the common business of life.[1] This was hardly the sort of opinion to make a sound Whig. But it was chiefly the affairs of the Church that were to change his attitude, and to make him the leader of a movement that broke down the chief bulwark of Conservatism in Scotland. Other minor causes contributed to alienate him from the Conservative party.

We have already seen the keen interest which Chalmers took in the discussion of the problems of political economy. To the title of a scientific economist he had, indeed, no claim. But his views were distinct, and they were not only held with all the ardour of his nature, but were advanced with all the power of his enthralling eloquence. His chief treatise on the subject was published in January 1832. It went counter to many of the accepted doctrines of the dominant school. It avowed distrust of the current nostrums, made light of the effect of legislative changes, and based the hopes of an improved economic state of the population on the prevalence of religious and moral principles. In its essence it was an attack upon the doctrines of the Manchester School, and as such was a defence of sound Conservatism. But with that singularly purblind vision which, at certain phases of its history, has characterised the Tory party, it was made the object of ridicule and sarcasm in the pages of the *Quarterly Review*. There he was told that he was "incompetent to reason on the subject," and that his whole economical system was based on "a miserable sophism." The folly of journalistic controversy could scarcely have gone further than it did in this attack on one who was maintaining the very principles by which

[1] Life, by Hanna, vol. iii. p. 405.

Whig theories might be most successfully destroyed. At the very moment that the attack was being delivered, Chalmers was being courted by the Whig Government with all the arts of flattery. His advice was sought, appointments were filled on his recommendation, a humble deference was paid to his opinion. He would have been more than human had not this homage produced a modification in his attitude towards those who had carried out Reform. But he still maintained his rigid attitude of resistance to political dictation. When, in the midst of the wild mob agitation, and of the frenzy of revolutionary zeal that was passing over Europe, a motion was made for a National Fast, he refused to make the Church a handmaid in what seemed a political move. In the next year (1832) he desired that the Church should itself appoint such a Fast, without waiting for Government dictation, on the occasion of the outbreak of the cholera epidemic.

When in 1831 Government propounded a scheme of national education in Ireland which was to separate religious from secular teaching, Chalmers was alarmed at what seemed an attack upon religion. He felt—as many have felt since—that the scheme was fundamentally mistaken in its attempt to disregard the elemental force of religious feeling. His opposition was mitigated only by the fact that the problem in Ireland seemed one of insoluble difficulty, and that any settlement seemed desirable which would prevent the recrudescence of religious disputes. Scotland, he felt, was safe against the intrusion of any such principle, and the solution of the question in Ireland he was content to leave to politicians, so long as he had reason to be satisfied with the general rectitude of their aims. His mind was divided between the danger

of advancing the influence of Roman Catholicism, and the equal danger of minimising the essential necessity of a religious element in education. In such a perplexity it was small wonder that he preferred to keep such a controversy out of Scottish interests.

But a controversy of more direct interest for himself, and of far greater import for his country, was now entering upon a very critical phase. This was the controversy that eventually broke the Established Church in two, that raised the broad issue of the limits of the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and that in its results affected the national character more deeply than any other during the next generation. To southern eyes this controversy appears, on the first glance—and they have rarely given it more—a tangled maze out of which it is vain for any but a Scottish mind to find an intelligible issue, buried as it is in a dense underwood of doctrinal subtleties. It is perfectly true that ecclesiastical controversy, in every age and in every country, brings from its very complexity, and from the singular intermixture of parties, perplexity to any one who would trace its logical sequence. The Non-Intrusion controversy, as it was called—into which the whole intellectual and moral vigour of Scotland, in the middle part of the century, was thrown without stint or measure—certainly affords no exception to this rule. But its main topics, the main features of the discussion, the main steps by which one phase of the controversy succeeded to another, are perfectly clear. They may possibly be held to have something more than alien and altruistic interest for England, now that England is likely to become the arena of a contest, as keenly and perhaps as bitterly waged, on topics which are in essence precisely the same,

although their subject matter and their surrounding circumstances are apparently very different.

The occasion of this struggle was the operation of the rights of patronage, which had been restored by the Act of Queen Anne in 1711. That Act unquestionably placed in the hands of lay patrons a power which ever since the Reformation, except during the brief period when Episcopalianism was able to crush the national presbyterianism of the country, had been exercised either by congregations or by those whose powers belong to them as representatives of the congregations. The Act had been bitterly resented by a large body in the Church; and from time to time it had brought about secessions from the Church, on the part of those who refused to admit this interference with what they held to be essentially an ecclesiastical function. For many years, the Assembly had annually petitioned—although in a formal and perfunctory way—for the abolition of patronage. But the actual pressure of the Act had been all the less felt, because patronage rights were for many years exercised with great leniency, and in such a way as to provoke little discussion. The annual protest was rather an assertion of the rights of the Church than a remonstrance against any tangible wrong; and these rights were further safeguarded by a somewhat illogical procedure which required a formal "call" from the congregation to be a necessary adjunct of the patron's nomination before the induction of any incumbent.

But as the Moderate party became stronger, they did not hesitate to insist with greater firmness and with stricter rigour upon the observance of the Act. Without denying the necessity of a "call" from the congregation, they distinctly minimised the ma-

terial importance of that call by holding it as little more than a formality which might be fulfilled by a single signature. There was no desire to thrust upon congregations persons unfit or distasteful to them; and none protested against the abuse of patronage more strongly than did some of the leading Moderates. But they felt that even an occasional abuse of the right was a course less dangerous than the substitution for that right of a system which would make the Church independent of the civil power, but yet make her subject to the dictation of a blind and ignorant crowd of electors. It must be clearly remembered that the object of those who opposed the abolition of patronage was not to defend a privilege or power which happened to belong to certain lay patrons, but to maintain in the first place what they conceived to be a sound subordination of ecclesiastical to civil power, as the basis of real religious liberty; and, in the second place, what they were certain was likely to produce an educated and independent clergy, instead of one nominated by, and therefore dependent on, the mob.

But as the Moderate party lost its power, and as its members too often were distinguished only by a cold and lukewarm indifference which aped philosophy and latitudinarianism, the discordance between the nominee and the congregation became more and more marked. This discordance vastly increased as the new and more enthusiastic Evangelicalism once more asserted its hold over the Scottish people. One of the symptoms of their new religious spirit was a certain exaltation which exacted a heavy call upon the sympathies, and, perhaps, eluded any very clear intellectual statement. Differences of temperament

led to objections to the presentees which might no doubt be sincerely felt, but which admitted of no logical explanation, and which lay patrons and their nominees naturally refused to consider as valid grounds for an interference with their unquestionable rights under the law. The objections, however, were not less tenaciously held, because they were based on inadequate grounds of logic or of argument; to those who held them, indeed, such minor defects appeared only to prove that they had a deeper foundation in religion and in conscience. The increasing irritation to which disputed settlements gave rise, forced the opponents of patronage to new and bolder theories. The rights of lay patrons might be given them by the law of the land, but those could be exercised only subject to what was held to be an essential principle of the Church, which affirmed that no minister could be forced upon an unwilling congregation. This was called the "Non-Intrusion" principle, and upon this the battle between the Church and the State was to be waged. The choice of a battlefield was determined by circumstances which were Scottish only, and the steps by which the irritation was stimulated into a rancorous controversy belong to the history of Scotland. But the broad issue involved was one which must necessarily be fought out wherever Church and State find their powers so closely balanced that they are forced to fight in order that one or other may assert a mastery.

It was in 1832 that the patronage controversy seemed to come to an acute stage. The Evangelical party had now established its supremacy in the Church Courts. It was reflected in the feelings of the people, who were more than apt to doubt whether the patron's

nominee was always imbued with a sufficient unction of religious enthusiasm. But the political world had also changed, and its temper was ready to affect the mood in which ecclesiastical politics were judged. The ecclesiastical fight, perhaps, touched the Scottish national feeling more closely than the political; but we must, side by side with it, trace the course of politics within these two years.

Towards the close of the reign of George IV. the Ministry of the Duke of Wellington had got into serious difficulties, and had but a precarious tenure of power. The Whigs had supported Wellington in carrying the Catholic Emancipation Act, but they were bent on measures of reform from which the duke held back, and their further support could no longer be counted on. The older Tory party were exasperated at the passing of Catholic Emancipation, and were ready in their anger to turn against the duke. Meanwhile the air was full of agitation. In August the French Revolution came, and extorted the sympathy even of the Tories.[1] Thrones and crowns were toppling, and revolutions seemed to be the order of the day. The death of the king came in June 1830; the dissolution of Parliament in July; and the ensuing election gave the Ministry a scanty and precarious majority. Discontent and agitation prevailed throughout the population, and the newspapers were full of accounts of riot and incendiarism. The duke declared, in uncompromising words, against any project of Parliamentary Reform, and in so doing sealed the fate of his Government. In December

1 "Confound those French Ministers!" said Scott. "I can't forgive them for making a Jacobin of an old Tory like me" (Cockburn's "Memorials," p. 468).

1830 the Ministry of Lord Grey, pledged to Parliamentary Reform, assumed office, and to many it seemed as if the flood-gates of revolution were to be set open. The prevailing opinion in Scotland was enthusiastically in favour of the new schemes; and even those who, like Chalmers, were opposed to that reform, were moving in a course that gave it increased influence, and brought them nearer and nearer to the Whigs, if they did not indeed go further even than the somewhat timid counsels of those who were the Scottish representatives of the Whig Ministry. Jeffrey was now Lord Advocate and Henry Cockburn Solicitor-General. Their task was no easy one. After having long belonged to a party which had for more than a generation attacked the Administration, they found themselves responsible for order, and pledged to carry out reforms which it was easy to advocate in opposition, but much more difficult to carry out in legislative form; and they found it hard to steer a course which would not shake society to its foundations, and yet would satisfy the extreme wing of their Radical friends. Jeffrey had claims upon the party which could not be ignored; but he was unfitted for the Parliamentary arena. He had come to it too late in life, and had not the practical skill, nor the quick and decisive judgment necessary for one who was to carry out a great scheme of political change. He was tossed about on the waves of a great controversy, which he had not the true pilot skill to evade or to surmount.

It was in Scotland, indeed, that the urgent need of some Parliamentary change was most clearly necessary. The abuses there scarcely admitted of a defence. In a population of 2,300,000 only some 3000 persons

had a vote. The burgh franchise was in the hands of close and self-nominated corporations. The county franchise was held by a few proprietors who increased their power by the creation of fictitious votes, distributed amongst their dependents, and in most counties these fictitious voters were the large majority of the electors. The distribution of representatives was equally absurd. Glasgow, with a population of nearly 150,000, shared a single member with three petty burghs. Many considerable towns had no representation whatever.

Lord John Russell's first Reform Bill was introduced in March 1831. It was to give fifty members to Scotland instead of forty-five. In burghs the franchise of the corporation was to be abolished, and the £10 householders were to be the voters. In the counties all proprietors of £10 a year, and all occupiers of £50 a year, were to have a vote. It was estimated that 60,000 voters would thus be added to the register.

Petitions poured in from Scotland in favour of the Bill. Some of the men of greatest weight, who could not be identified with any revolutionary schemes, declared that it was urgently called for by the united voice of Scotland. The second reading of the English Bill, however, was carried only by a single voice, and only thirteen Scottish members voted in its favour. The Government were defeated on a detail of the English Bill, and a dissolution immediately took place. The election that ensued turned solely upon the question of Parliamentary Reform, and it was carried out amidst scenes of riot and agitation. At Edinburgh in particular, the Corporation were not allowed to carry out the election without threats of personal violence from the mob, and when Dundas was chosen

instead of Jeffrey, who had been persuaded to seek the seat, the magistrates could not return from the Council Chambers without braving the excited violence of a mob who were prepared to lynch those who had declared for the Tory candidate. The violence of the day was succeeded by rioting at night, which was quelled only by calling in the aid of the military. The Ministry succeeded in so far changing the complexion of Scottish representation, even on an unreformed register, as to obtain a majority of three; while in England they had a safe and secure majority. When Parliament met, the second Reform Bill was brought in, and its second reading was carried by a majority of 136. The Scottish Bill followed, but, greatly to the disappointment of the Whig party, it was found that Jeffrey had consented to make the franchise one of £15 instead of £10 as in England. The stalwart insistence of the Government supporters forced a change in this respect, and the number of Scottish members was increased from fifty to fifty-three. It was carried through the Commons, after fierce debate, by easy majorities.

But in October the English Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords, and this was the signal for new and more fervent agitation throughout the country. The Government were at their wits' end to preserve the peace, and in Scotland above all serious rioting was expected, and would, it was feared, prove fatal to the scheme of Reform. The Government strengthened themselves, and gave confidence to their followers, by obtaining an easy vote of confidence from the Commons before proroguing Parliament.

In December the English Bill was again brought

in, and again pushed through its various stages by large majorities and sometimes without any division. In the Lords the second reading was carried by a majority of nine.

The news was brought to Edinburgh on Sunday the 15th of April 1832, by an express coach, decorated with white ribbons and rosettes, which made the journey from London in the unprecedentedly short time of thirty-six hours. The tidings were received with unbounded enthusiasm on the one side; with despair, that foretold the rapid downfall of all existing institutions, on the other. It seemed to the frenzied imagination of men strung to the last pitch of excitement, as if revolution were imminent, and as if resistance were in vain.

But the Bill had still pitfalls to pass. In committee in the House of Lords, the Ministry were defeated on one point, and they immediately resigned. The danger of a popular outbreak was great. Each side accused the other of a criminal profligacy in their political conduct. The Scottish ministers were chiefly anxious that no outbreak of violence should occur. There were not wanting those who thought they would find in such an outbreak the opportunity for yet wilder schemes.

The Duke of Wellington attempted to form a Ministry, but failed; and after seven days the Whigs were replaced in office. The duke now withdrew his opposition, and on the 4th of June the Bill became law. The Scottish Bill followed, and took no long time. It passed the third reading in the House of Lords on the 17th of July.

The triumph was celebrated by a great trades procession in Edinburgh, when banners and triumphal

arches proclaimed the dawn of a new epoch of political liberty. For a time there was a frenzy of enthusiasm for the new liberties extorted from a reluctant House of Lords, and to the superficial observer it might appear that the country was at one in its reception of the new order of things. The election took place in the late autumn, and it resulted in a sweeping victory for the Whigs. The Ministry had forty-four supporters in Scotland, and only nine Tories were returned. Jeffrey and Abercromby were returned for Edinburgh by sweeping majorities of 4028 and 3855, against 1529 for the Tory candidate—where hitherto the Parliamentary constitutency had consisted of thirty-three self-chosen councillors. Their triumph was celebrated by a procession in which the successful candidates were carried through the city in triumphal chairs "placed upon a flat car, and covered with blue merino and ornamented with buff fringings and tassels." "The whole equipage," we are told, "had a very gorgeous and attractive appearance." To be made ridiculous was perhaps not a higher price than Jeffrey was ready to pay for his success. But the election was not allowed to pass without disclosing the fact that the Whig party was not at one, and that the more moderate portion were not only suspected but disliked by those who desired to proceed further on the path in which they had made so promising a beginning. The Lord Advocate had now to preach moderation to those who had tasted blood, and he soon found himself stigmatised by many as a reactionary.

So far we have Scotland at the work of Parliamentary Reform in which she was closely associated with England, and where her course was virtually directed

by that which Parliament adopted in regard to England. But we now have her employed, and to a large extent absorbed, in purely Scottish questions. The first of these was the question of Scottish administration. Under the Tory rule, it had been the habit to entrust Scottish affairs to one predominant hand—it might be the Lord Advocate, it might be some other minister whose Scottish connections were strong. This habit had been bitterly denounced by the Whigs, who had thought that the remedy was to be found in making the Government of Scotland more closely bound up with that of England, and minimising its essentially Scottish features. They soon found the error of this when responsibility became their own; but they had no very satisfactory alternative to propose. The fact was that they had no statesman of sufficient weight to take the place of Dundas, whose rule was still a living memory in Scotland. There was not amongst the Scottish Whigs any man who could at once make himself the representative of Scotland, and yet exercise a supreme force in Imperial politics, such as fell naturally to Dundas. Jeffrey was, and continued to be, an Edinburgh advocate who happened to be in the House of Commons. He had none of the aptitudes of a statesman, and he took to the work too late in life to acquire them. He found himself burdened with a mass of details which were irksome and distasteful to him. He sought help by having part of the Scottish business entrusted to a Scottish Lord of the Treasury; and for half a century that system continued. The Whig element in Parliament House ceased to decry the office of the Lord Advocate now that the office was in their own hands; they only lamented the variety of insignificant details that fell to his charge. But they failed

to observe that these details were chiefly troublesome because the Lord Advocate sank to the position of a subordinate official—to whom Scottish affairs indeed might be entrusted—but who could not shape, or even materially affect, the general principles upon which the Government of the day was based, and who was compelled to subordinate his treatment of Scottish matters to these principles which he was powerless to modify or to shape. It was one of the evils of this system that Scottish questions were relegated to a second place, as matters which a subordinate official might settle, so long as he disturbed no principle convenient for application to England. The Lord Advocate could never hold Cabinet office, and his Parliamentary position was never strong enough to allow him an effective voice in the settlement of Imperial politics. Scottish affairs became inevitably under such a system a matter of secondary interest to Parliament—something which might be tolerated so long as it was not unduly troublesome.

Something of this was seen in the first purely Scottish business—the Bill for Burgh Reform. On this question the Lord Advocate—who could offer no opinion on his own initiative—was careful to ascertain the views of the Government, and expressed them to his constituents as the emissary of the Prime Minister. This was scarcely a position to which Dundas would have submitted; but it was the most that could now be claimed by the minister who claimed to lead the Whig party in his country. In March 1833 the Bill was introduced, and after second reading it was submitted—by a bad, if not an unconstitutional, precedent—to a committee of all the Scottish burgh representatives. To a superficial observer this might appear to be a concession

to national independence ; in reality, it degraded Scottish business to a provincial level. Fortunately the plan worked very badly—and for no one worse than the Lord Advocate, who was driven to his wits' end by the contending inanities of every political quack and visionary who had schemes of his own, and who fancied that he was summoned to propound them. "The Scotch Burgh Committee," says Jeffrey, "goes on as ill as possible. . . . They chatter and wrangle and contradict and grow angry, and read letters and extracts from blockheads of town clerks and little fierce agitators ; and forgetting that they are members of a great Legislature, and (some of them) attached to a fair Ministry, go on speculating and suggesting and debating, more loosely, crudely, and interminably than a parcel of college youths in the first noviciate of disceptation." It is a pleasant picture of a Reformed Parliament, and presents no flattering view of the Scottish elements in that Parliament ! The Bill fared more hardly at the hands of friends than even at those of its enemies ; but after a rough-and-tumble struggle it passed ; and a few weeks later, Jeffrey ceased to be Lord Advocate, and was raised to the Bench in May 1834. Other Scottish questions were obtruding themselves, and all his old Whig zeal was required to cope with the fertile crop which sprang up round him. Not the least important that arose just as he was quitting office was that of Church Patronage, on which a Parliamentary Committee was appointed on the motion of Sir George Sinclair. Let us see how that question had ripened within the last two years.

In 1832, as we have seen, the controversy with regard to patronage had assumed a critical phase in the General Assembly. Dr. Chalmers was Moderator for

that year, and was consequently debarred from participating in the debates. But he soon turned with ardour to the study of the question, and in 1833 he threw himself into the fray. The course of politics, with its increasing development of the popular element, no doubt gave impulse to the claim of that element in the settlement of ministers, and swelled the wave rising against patronage. But Chalmers entered on the contest in no such spirit. He was opposed to Parliamentary Reform. He was Conservative in sympathy. The ultimate results of the struggle he did not foresee; and there can be no doubt that what mainly determined Chalmers' attitude in the struggle was his desire to adhere to the traditions of Scotland (of which he thought the Evangelical party to be most representative), and to strengthen the hold which the Church had upon the affections of the people. Adverse cries were rising from the Radical party. Some desired the total abolition of patronage; for that Chalmers was not prepared. Others were advocating the principles of Voluntaryism, and a society had been formed which denounced the Establishment principle as unscriptural and degrading; for them Chalmers had nothing but uncompromising opposition. His aim at first was a simple and cautious one: to preserve the forms established by law, but to prevent their abuse.

The first point for decision—and it was a very vital one—was whether the Church had in her armoury, without resorting to the Civil Legislature, weapons by which a solution of the difficulty might be reached. At first Chalmers and those who thought with him were inclined to the slow process of a series of judgments in particular cases which might vindicate the right of challenge in the congregation as opposed to

the nomination of the patron. This was thought too slow, and it was resolved that an Act of the General Assembly, giving directions as to the course to be pursued by the inferior Church Courts, should be attempted. Chalmers still thought that this should be accompanied by an Act of the Legislature, which seemed to him to be required in order to confirm the decision of the Church. But this was opposed by the Whig politicians, who dreaded the introduction of such a topic into the debates of the Legislature, and who found perhaps small encouragement from English colleagues, to whom the whole subject seemed both arid and dangerous. Chalmers, in advising this course, proposed what was at once bold and logical; and he had ample reason to repent of having yielded to the views of the politicians in abandoning it.

The form which it was determined that the Act of the Assembly should follow was that of securing to a majority of the congregation an absolute right of veto. Chalmers was selected as the protagonist, and he defended the measure by an appeal to the earlier traditions of the Church from the year 1578 onwards. He maintained that it would be unjust to an unlettered — but possibly conscientious — majority, to ask them to assign reasons for their opposition; and while all his sympathies prompted him to assert for the Church an "independence on the conceits and follies, the wayward extravagance or humours of the populace," he yet found it needful to vindicate for the "cottage patriarch" the right to object without stating the reason why. It is hard to see the logic of this; harder still was it for the lay patron and his nominee to see a right which was theirs by law annihilated by an unreasoning

opposition which they were not to be allowed to combat, because it was not to base itself upon reason, but claimed the sanction of religious conviction.

The proposal was defeated by a majority of twelve in the Assembly of 1833. But its supporters were powerful in the country, and they were restless and determined. The ensuing year was spent in a diligent organisation of their forces, and in 1834 the same proposal was passed by a majority of forty-six.

In passing the Veto Act the Church undoubtedly strained to the utmost its constitutional power. The Church Courts were, indeed, possessed of high authority. They were established courts of the realm, and within their own sphere they were independent. But to maintain that they might, by their action, render nugatory an Act of the Civil Legislature—and this was really what the Veto Act implied—was to create an *imperium in imperio*, and to court a collision with the Civil Power. But for the time it looked as if this bold exercise of its prerogative might not be challenged. It had the support of the law officers of the day. It had the countenance of the Lord Chancellor (Brougham). It coincided with the preponderant feeling both in the country and in the Church. It might easily be represented as not an interference with the Patronage Act, but only a decision as to the conditions under which that Act was to be administered. A comparison of the whole series of enactments on the subject did undoubtedly give countenance to the view that there were two conditions precedent to a settlement—nomination by a patron and consent on the part of the congregation. The Veto Act might be held only to define and to

give prominence to the recognised right of consent. It remained to be seen how it would work, and whether in practice it would bring about a collision between the civil and the ecclesiastical authority.

The next episode which affected the Church was one which showed that Chalmers had in no degree abated the ardour of his support of the principle of religious establishment. The incomes of the ministers of Edinburgh had from the seventeenth century been drawn from what was called the Annuity Tax, levied upon the occupiers of all inhabited houses. From this tax all members of the College of Justice—which meant practically all who belonged to any section of the legal profession—were exempt. This exemption, and the fact that occupiers and not owners were subject to the impost, rendered all the more unpopular a tax which provoked of itself much opposition and presented the most irritating form of Church endowment. It became a favourite topic of denunciation amongst those who were hostile to all ecclesiastical endowments, a class whom the recent political upheaval had made more restless and more bold. An attempt in Parliament to abolish the exemption and to mitigate the pressure of the tax was made by Jeffrey in 1833, but it met with the most strenuous opposition as a temporising and timid measure for perpetuating a tax odious in any form. The agitation against it proceeded apace, and descended to the worst devices. The tax had been enforced with leniency, and both its amount and the number of those who paid it were suffered to fall below the scale permitted by the law. But refusal of payment came from those who had no excuse of poverty, and whose sole object was to attack the Church. To have condoned their contumacy would

have been a confession of weakness. Undeterred by the odium it excited, the Church was obliged to have recourse to the exaction of its rights by legal process; and Chalmers in particular denounced the conduct of those who refused to permit a modification of the law, and yet disgraced themselves by resistance to a tax which was one of the recognised conditions of the occupancy of their houses. He did not mince his words. "There is not," he said, speaking of those who sought to escape from their obligation to pay a legal tax, "an honourable man who, if once made to view the matter in the light which I think to be the true one, would not spurn from him the burning infamy of such a transaction, and refuse all share in it."

In the year 1833, so strong was the opposition that no fewer than 846 persons submitted to prosecution rather than pay. Imprisonment had to be resorted to, and when the defaulters were liberated processions of thousands accompanied these self-made martyrs to their homes. On the part of the Town Council it was proposed that a fixed payment should be accepted in lieu of the tax, and that the number of city ministers should be reduced from eighteen to thirteen. Against the proposal Chalmers protested with characteristic fervour. It was to clip the wings of the Church when her task was heaviest; to rob the nation of her best agency for diminishing pauperism and crime, and to steal from the poor man the best part of his inheritance. "I have already professed myself," he said, "and will profess myself again, an unflinching, an out-and-out—and I maintain it, the only consistent Radical. The dearest object of my earthly existence is the elevation of the common people, humanised by

Christianity. . . . I trust the day is coming when the people will find out who are their best friends, and when the mock patriotism of the present day shall be unmasked by an act of robbery and spoliation on the part of those who would deprive the poor of their best and highest patrimony. . . . I will resist even to the death that alienation which goes but to swell the luxury of the higher ranks at the expense of the Christianity of the lower orders." These were the words of the man who was to be the main agent in founding a Church the majority of which, only a generation after his death, and under the shadow of his great reputation, have been found ready to join in a crusade to sweep away all ecclesiastical endowments.

There was something of chivalrous boldness in the scheme to which Chalmers and those most closely associated with him turned all their efforts in 1834, at the very time when the existing revenues of the Church were so bitterly attacked. The spread of Church accommodation had not kept pace with the growth of population, and in spite of the fragmentary efforts of the Dissenting sects there was in Scotland, especially in the larger cities, a great dearth of spiritual provision. Such a state of things could not satisfy a Church that was determined to play a leading part in social amelioration. Careless of the attacks of their opponents, Chalmers and his friends had set on foot a scheme for providing Glasgow with twenty additional churches—a scheme which their unresting efforts accomplished in the course of seven years. They procured from Parliament an Act which freed these new Churches from the chance of falling into the patronage of those who had the right of presenting to the mother charge, and vested the right of appointment in the congregation.

Chalmers now turned, when the Glasgow scheme was set on foot, to a similar scheme for Edinburgh; and far from shaping his policy in obedience to the tactics of his opponents, he carried the war into the enemy's camp by approaching the Government for a new grant. The request was favourably received; and whether it would have been ultimately successful or not, it was fed by hopes until the fall of the Whig Ministry in November 1834. The accession of Peel to power in no way dispelled these hopes. But alas! they were doomed to disappointment. The virulence of the Voluntaries increased apace. The Parliamentary opposition became too strong for a Ministry whose tenure of power was weak, and whose period of office lasted only a few months. The Whig ministers who succeeded definitely abandoned the plan, and Chalmers' trust in political aid received a rebuff from which it never recovered. Henceforward he felt that the Church must rely on its own unaided efforts, and such a conviction necessarily lessened in his eyes the value of a submission to the Civil Power as the protecting ally of the Church. It deepened his distrust of the Whigs, which he had long felt, and which the nomination by Lord John Russell of an unsympathetic Commission to inquire into the affairs of the Church confirmed in the minds of all her friends. He was stirred to a fury of indignation and impatience at the excuses which were pleaded against what he held to be a clamant need, urged on behalf of the helpless and the poor. "A restless, locomotive, clamorous minority"—this is the verdict with which he dismisses the question in a letter to Lord Melbourne—"by the noise they have raised, and by the help of men irreligious themselves, and therefore taking no interest, but the contrary, in the

religious education of the people, had attained in the eyes of our rulers a magnitude and an importance which do not belong to them—while the bulk of the population, quiet because satisfied, are, by an overwhelming preponderance, on the side of the Establishment." The appointment of the Commission was looked upon, not only as a scouting of their claims, but as a menace to the independence of the Church, and as such it was characterised by the Dean of Faculty Hope—the former Tory law officer. The visitation of the Church by the Crown or by Parliament was, in his opinion, utterly destructive of the principle and independence of Presbytery. It was from the Tory party, where it was least to be expected, that the Church received encouragement in the battle which she was about to wage for her independence. Such a principle might have involved consequences which probably the Tory lawyer did not quite foresee, in establishing the independent authority of the Church. But it is odd that Chalmers, who was soon to assert that independence with more dogged insistence, hesitated to accept to the full the battle-cry with which Hope would fain have supplied him. The episode was one, however, of transient and minor importance compared with the larger contest that was now taking shape.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DISRUPTION.

We have now to trace the course of a struggle, in some respects the most remarkable of the whole period which we have had under review. It shows the latest phase of a strife, the elements of which had been present for centuries in the life of Scotland, but the ultimate bearing of which had not been seen only because her history had exhibited so many striking and dramatic contrasts that nothing approaching a logical or constitutional settlement had been possible. Before the close of the seventeenth century, the extreme section of the Presbyterian party had obtained a complete triumph—and one in which the dominant political party had been ready for its own reasons to acquiesce, without careful consideration of the principles of ecclesiastical independence which it involved. That had been secured, apparently for all time, by the legislative enactments which dealt with the new settlement. We are not accustomed nowadays to consider that pledges, however solemn, which are given by the legislation of one age with respect to the immutability of certain rights, can fetter the discretion of future generations. But of the intention there is no doubt; nor can there be any question of the solemnity

of the words by which the independence of the Scottish Church was secured, both by the Act of Settlement in 1689, and by the Act of Union. The constitution of the Church, so preserved by all the sanction which Parliamentary pledges could give, did certainly secure to it a very far-reaching independence of the Civil Courts and of the State; and the traditions of Scottish history gave the most abundant countenance and support to the most extensive interpretation of that independence. Time soon proved, however, how flimsy such pledges were, as by their very nature they are bound to be. Only four years after the Act of Union, the statute restoring patronage was passed in 1711; and a far-reaching change was introduced into the order of the Scottish Church by the authority of a British Parliament. We may support the principles of that Act, and believe that it did good and not harm to the country. But it would be the merest perversity to deny that it was contrary to the whole theory of ecclesiastical independence which had been apparently secured by the most binding pledges. It is only too evident that the promoters of the Act had very little thought of the interests and wishes of Scotland in regard to the matter. Such interests and wishes would have weighed for very little with them; but Harley and St. John, when they restored patronage in Scotland, undoubtedly showed that they were well-advised as to the interests of their own party there. It would be absurd to pretend that they had any other object in view.

The passing of the Act provoked no very wide-felt discontent. An active and able party in the Scottish Church were strongly in its favour. The excess of ecclesiastical zeal which would, a few years before,

have made it the ground of rebellion, had now waxed faint. For at least half a century it was administered cautiously, and only on rare and isolated occasions did it lead to acute difficulty. A formal protest was, no doubt, annually renewed in the Assembly; but even that was abandoned when the Moderate party gained complete ascendency.

The general feeling of the country, which was much more absorbed in other matters than in ecclesiastical disputes, or religious wrangling, contributed to the same end. The national taste for topics such as these was for the time lulled to rest. A spirit very strangely in contrast with the old virulence of theological disputation was abroad in Scotland during the eighteenth century; and so long as the rights of patronage were leniently exercised, or not flagrantly abused, the country seemed to acquiesce. The limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority were matters of occasional contest, but only in comparatively small circles. The country, as a whole, found no need to formulate them with any more specific accuracy. The disputes on the subject led, from time to time, from the days of the Erskines onwards, to the formation of new sects, each of which claimed to be the sole repository of pure and undefiled ecclesiastical orthodoxy. But the country at large was little stirred by them.

It was only when the rights of patronage began to be exercised with something more of what opponents called callousness, and what the owners called independence, that the withers of ecclesiastical fervour began to be wrung. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, and in the opening years of the nineteenth, there was not a little ground for the irritation aroused in the breasts of the devout Presbyterians by the mental

and theological attitude of the average patron's nominee. A certain modish affectation of worldliness became the fashion amongst many of the younger clergy. Their obtrusive latitudinarianism, and their aping of philosophical rationalism, were redeemed by none of the intellectual vigour which belonged to the party which they pretended to represent, and whose traditions they meant to carry on. Occasionally the nominee was, it is to be feared, guilty of some laxity of conduct which the fervour of the more zealous religionists was not likely to extenuate. The Moderate party, who were the main defenders of patronage, lost their personal sway and their vigour in defence at the very time when the Evangelicals made those advances in zeal and self-assertiveness which we have already described. Patronage became more and more irksome; and the opposition which it aroused soon revived, in the most acute and virulent form, that struggle between the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities which is as old as government itself, and which again and again had found in Scotland a chosen battle-ground.

The struggle, which may be said to close the epoch of which the narrative is here presented, is one which belongs chiefly to ecclesiastical history. It is only touched here because it forms the most powerful factor in Scottish history in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. We can, of course, dwell only on its main features, and on these, not as they are seen in the Church Courts, or in the personal contests of different parties in the Church, but as they affect the general history of the country, and the broad current of national opinion. The struggle has some aspects of singular interest. It shows how an old strife, of which the main issues were rooted in the Scottish mind by the

history of centuries, could resuscitate, under the forms of party debate and political faction peculiar to the nineteenth century, the undying obstinacy which had marked the old and rougher contests of a former age. Its more vivid episodes seem to awaken the echoes that were slumbering amidst the valleys and the hill-sides where the Covenanters had prayed, and fought, and suffered—echoes that resounded at times with all the dignity and dramatic fervour of biblical denunciation. The martyrdom of the nineteenth century seems, no doubt, to have about it a considerable element of financial calculation; a good deal of fiscal strategy enters into the fight; and the fury of the contest seems often tempered by a shrewd regard for political tactics and for the finesse of party management. But when all is said in regard to the more humorous elements in the struggle, it remains a notable instance of a nation fighting a battle of old and essential principles which had left an indelible impress on its past history, and bringing that battle to a conclusion with no lack of spirit and of dignity. One thing at least may be said without hesitation. The importance of the issue as regards the political as well as the ecclesiastical position admitted of no doubt. But the battle was fought with singularly little effective assistance from either party in the State. When we look to their treatment of it, we can find very little of principle, and we search in vain for any display of real statesmanship. Of its ultimate effect upon the political position of Scotland it is difficult to speak decidedly; but this at least was an inevitable consequence, that Scotland was largely thrown back upon herself, and acquired, in regard to a vast body of religious and political opinion, a tradition of separation from, and even of opposi-

tion to, England. The question at issue was too often treated by English politicians with an impatient and contemptuous arrogance, which both parties to the fight resented, but which helped the course of the Extremists much more than that of those who stood for the law of the realm.

The struggle is interesting in another aspect. It shows us the predominant and magnetic influence of one man of great genius upon his nation; but it also shows us how he was himself led, in the heat of the battle and under the strain of strategical necessity, to adopt an attitude, and to take a share in measures, from which in the earlier stages he would have recoiled with horror.

We have already seen how, in his efforts to obtain aid for Church extension, Chalmers had found that the support of either political party was a feeble reed on which to rest. But of the two he resented far most the treatment his Church had met with from the Whigs; and he increased rather than lessened the closeness of his connection with the opposite party. Peel had not been unwilling to help, although his tenure of office in 1834 had been too short to allow him to fulfil his promise. The Whigs had shown less of sympathy; and they had recently appointed an adverse Commission to inquire into the affairs of the Church. When at length that Commission's report showed the need for an increase of the resources of the Church, the Government had no effective measures to propose. The Government of Lord Melbourne from 1835 to 1841 was a singularly weak one; and Chalmers did not hesitate to throw all the weight of his authority against it in Scotland. Their policy in regard to the Irish Church roused his fiercest opposi-

tion, as an attack upon the sacredness of religious endowments. Their connection with O'Connell was not likely to gain them support either from Chalmers or his countrymen; and from every aspect of the case his hopes were avowedly placed on the return of the Conservatives to power. In 1837 the death of William the Fourth led to a new election, and Chalmers had no hesitation as to the part he should play. The question of Church or no Church was, to use the words of the Duke of Wellington in 1838, the question of the hour; and on such a question Chalmers could not speak with an uncertain voice. It deepened his hatred for reform when he saw the robbery of religious endowments threatened as a likely result of that Reform. The whole attitude of the Whig party and its leaders—more especially as the Radical element in that party became more pronounced—not only offended Chalmers in his religious feelings, but grated on all that was deepest in his nature. After the Queen's accession Chalmers went to court as one of a deputation to present an Address on behalf of the Church. The scene and all it involved stirred all his chivalry and his romance; the only thing that offended him was the Whig surroundings of the throne. The "hard utilitarian face" of Joseph Hume irritated him; yet so much was this "the general aspect and physiognomy of the people round me, that I felt the atmosphere most uncongenial to all that is chivalrous and sentimental in loyalty." His Conservatism was not an opinion merely; it was with him as it was with Scott, an impulse and a passion. The relations between him and Peel became more and more cordial; and the flowing tide of Conservatism, that was soon to submerge the feeble administration of Melbourne,

seemed to him likely to bring new strength and prosperity to the Scottish Church.

Such was the position when Chalmers consented to deliver in the spring of 1838, for a London society, a course of lectures on Church Establishments. The lectures were begun in April, in the Hanover Square Rooms in London; and partly owing to the interest which the question excited at the moment, partly to the established fame of the lecturer, they had enormous vogue. They gathered together an audience of unexampled influence, were followed with rapt admiration, and fixed, perhaps, the high-water mark of Chalmers' eloquence. The language used of them reads at the present day as that of exaggeration and hyperbole; but when all reasonable deductions are made, there can be no question that they kindled and intensified in a marked degree the ardour of loyalty to the Church. Day after day his words were followed by a crowd of the leading politicians of the day; and many of the bishops of the Anglican Establishment welcomed the defence of their Church by one who spoke only as a minister of an alien Communion, and who was soon to be the chief founder of a sect that felt itself obliged to disown any connection with the State. When printed, the lectures were received with the same unbounded admiration by a still wider audience.

But it is necessary to observe what was the exact position which he claimed for the Church. It is sufficiently curious, because it reveals an odd inconsistency which was bound sooner or later to embarrass and encumber his position. The lectures were spoken on the invitation of, and were addressed to, the Evangelical or Low Church party. He reconciled his own

position, as a Presbyterian clergyman defending an Episcopal Establishment, by making light of what he held to be smaller differences. He would have a comprehensive Church; he would have "the Church of England to come down from all that is transcendental or mysterious in her pretension"; she is to "quit the plea of her exclusive apostolical derivation"; she is to be "the rallying post of Protestantism," and so on. We can imagine how such opinions would be received by the High Church party, who already formed the most active and most energetic, and who were soon to be the most influential, section of the Church of England. He struck at the very root of their theory of the Church—at those features of their creed for which they were ready, if need be, to sacrifice even establishment and endowment. But when he came to discuss the nature of the connection between Church and State, his position is essentially different. In fact, all he contended for was an organised provision for the Church and the clergy; any semblance of authority by the civil magistrate in ecclesiastical matters he expressly repudiated. He cited the example of the Scottish Church; and claimed for that Church an ecclesiastical authority absolutely illimitable. An Established Church it was the bounden duty of the State to maintain; but the doctrine and the laws of that Church were to be settled by none but an ecclesiastical authority; nor was the power of the State to advance one step beyond that of giving or withholding her tribute of maintenance. Both the making and the interpretation of her own laws were to belong to the Church alone; and this, he proudly asserted, was indubitably the case with his own Church. "The magistrate might withdraw his pro-

tection and she cease to be an Establishment any longer; but in all the high matters of sacred and spiritual jurisdiction, she would be the same as before." No champion of spiritual supremacy could assert claims more sweeping or more bold.

The position is an odd and even a humorous one. The most orthodox and Conservative party of the Church of England, those who conceived that the divine mission of that Church was to maintain a sort of intermediate territory between Roman Catholicism on the one hand and the Protestant Dissenters on the other, invite a Presbyterian minister to discourse to them in support of their Establishment. If they felt any qualms about the inconsistency of doctrine between the lecturer and themselves, they probably soothed these by the recollection that he hailed from a country which held Roman Catholicism in abhorrence, and that as member of an Established Church he could not support Dissent. They listened without misgiving to his high claim of ecclesiastical prerogative. It did not occur to them that, in the case of their own Church at least, no such claim could have any historical foundation, unless the Reformation settlement were repudiated, however fairly such a claim might be made for the Church of Scotland, and might be based upon the clear wording of Acts of Parliament. But still less did it strike them that such a claim, on whatever ground it rested, involved consequences from which they would themselves have shrunk, and that it in essence coincided with the views of the High Church party, whose aim and attitude they regarded with even more horror than that of the Dissenters. They seem even to have failed to perceive that this claim involved a legislative power in convocation, and placed a veto on the decision

of any Civil Court in ecclesiastical affairs. Had they been told that in the foundation of this claim the whole edifice of lay patronage might virtually be overthrown, they would have recoiled in horror from such a prospect.

The situation proved, if proof were necessary, the slender understanding of Scottish affairs that was possible to an English audience. If the magnates who gathered in the Hanover Square Rooms to listen to a series of eloquent addresses in defence of their Church found that the defence was rested upon grounds which involved consequences the very opposite of what they aimed at, they had only their own short-sighted and purblind vision to thank for it. The claims put forward by Chalmers might be impossible ; but he was not inconsistent in making them. In the colour of his Evangelicalism, and in the tenor of his religious views, he had a certain affinity with the Evangelical or Low Church party in the Church of England ; and this was enough to induce them to call him to their aid. But in his ecclesiastical principles he was not only divided from them : they could not even perceive the bearing of his views. According to these views there was no inconsistency in Chalmers' quoting with the highest approbation, as he did in the next General Assembly, the words of Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter. The inconsistency was only in those who accepted a certain similarity of religious tone and sentiment as a basis for an alliance which had no foundation in principle or in logic. The logic of religious partisanship is never very apparent to the lay mind ; it becomes worse than ever when principles are pounded together in a confused medley in obedience to a supposed concurrence in religious sentiment.

Before these lectures were delivered, the Church of Scotland was launched upon the fight. We have seen that in 1834 the Church had passed a Veto Act, which asserted in its fullest form—in a form, indeed, so full as almost to nullify the rights of patrons—the claim of congregations to object to a presentee. The law officers of the Whig Government of the day approved of the Act, and no collision between the Church and the State seemed likely to result from it.

But the matter soon came to the test of law. The Earl of Kinnoul presented a Mr. Young to the parish of Auchterarder in Perthshire. With his personal qualifications—as with those of the other persons who figure in this and succeeding suits—we need not trouble ourselves, as they in no way affect the principle at stake. When the Presbytery proceeded to take steps for his settlement, it found that only two persons "signed the call," and that five-sixths of the communicants dissented from his appointment, as adverse to the spiritual interests of the parish. The Presbytery upheld the objections under the Veto Act, and the presentee not only appealed against the Presbytery to the Synod, or immediately superior Ecclesiastical Court, but—what was of far more serious import—to the Court of Session. The decision of that Court must obviously turn upon the legality of the Veto Act, and as a consequence involved the whole question of the limits of the legislative power vested in the General Assembly. The case was heard before the whole Court, and in February 1838 a majority of the judges pronounced the opinion that in rejecting Mr. Young on the sole ground that a majority of the communicants have dissented *without any reason assigned*, the Presbytery had acted illegally and in violation of their duty.

This position was alarming enough. At the ensuing General Assembly a declaratory resolution was passed, upholding the spiritual independence of the Church, while it admitted "the exclusive jurisdiction of the Civil Courts with regard to the civil rights and emoluments secured by law to the Church and the ministers thereof." This seemed to guard the position, and an appeal against the decision was carried to the House of Lords. That appeal was decided in May 1839, and the House of Lords not only upheld the decision, but most unequivocally disposed of any claim on the part of the Church Court to reject a presentee except on the ground of his lack of personal qualification, as to which the Church Court might judge. The question whether the absence of consent on the part of the majority of the communicants was a disqualification, was answered unequivocally in the negative.

This decision placed the Church in a difficult position, for which, however, she had only herself to thank. There can be no question that the objection of a majority of the inhabitants had frequently exercised weight on the judgment of the Church Courts, and that the principle had been adopted that "fitness for the situation to which they were appointed"—as attested by substantial acceptance on the part of the communicants—was a necessary "qualification." The change in the political atmosphere, and the increasing assertion of popular rights, might tend to make this element intrude itself more frequently and with more capricious motive. So far Chalmers, at least, was not in sympathy with any subserviency to popular caprice, however much his association with the Evangelical party might dispose him to attach weight to the element of unreasoning religious conviction, under

the cloak of which personal animosity was not unlikely to shelter itself. The Church might have trusted itself to hold the balance, to do what was adequate to prevent unsuitable settlements, and so to avoid, as it had so long avoided, bringing to the hard arbitrament of the law-courts the old struggle between the limits of the ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction. But by passing the Veto Act she distinctly threw down the gauntlet, and prescribed a certain rule by which such matters were to be judged, careless whether that method conformed to the civil statutes or not. The highest court of the realm had now virtually pronounced that the Veto Act did not so conform, and it ignored altogether, as it was bound to ignore, the idea that the Veto Act could introduce a change into the statute law of the country.

In the Assembly of 1839, immediately after the decision of the House of Lords, a motion proposed by the Moderates for the repeal of the Veto Act was rejected; the principle of "Non-Intrusion" was again asserted; and it was resolved to appeal to the Government for the help of the Legislature in order to prevent collision between the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The appeal was a bold, and, indeed, in some aspects, almost an unconstitutional one, but the Church had in her favour the circumstance that the Veto Act, which gave the occasion for the collision, had been passed with the full assent of the Whig Government in 1834, a government which was practically represented by that of 1839.

As might be expected from a government so weak as that of Lord Melbourne, they temporised with the question. "They felt its urgency;" they "would give it their best consideration." Meanwhile they would

exercise the Church patronage of the Crown in accordance with the law of the Church. Such feeble devices were least of all helpful to those whom they were meant to serve.

Meanwhile other cases arose which made the matter month by month more urgent. In the case of Lethendy, the nominee of the Crown (to whom the patronage belonged) was vetoed by the congregation, and therefore rejected by the Presbytery. The Crown thereupon made a new presentation, but an interdict was served by the Court of Session, at the instance of the first nominee, upon the ordination of the second. On the orders of the Assembly, and in spite of the protests of the original presentee, the Presbytery ordained the second, and they were forthwith summoned to the bar of the Court of Session, and subjected to the censure of the Court, with a distinct threat that the sentence upon a similar action in future would be one of imprisonment.

The issue was now fully joined, and it was hardly possible that any terms of settlement could now be arranged. Virtually the non-intrusionist party in the Church claimed a jurisdiction co-ordinate with that of the Civil Courts—a claim which was inconsistent with the principles upon which the law of the country rests. The attitude of the combatants on each side became more and more clearly defined. The Moderates maintained that the Veto Act, condemned as it virtually was by the decision of the Courts, must be treated as non-existent. They denounced the pact by which the Government agreed to administer Crown patronage in terms of an Act of Assembly which was condemned by the Civil Courts. They refused to admit that the collision between the Church and the State was one which

could be avoided by legislation until the constitutional supremacy of the Civil Courts was fully vindicated. To that vindication they looked for the maintenance both of civil and religious liberty, and they appealed to the constitutional sense of Englishmen to protect their country and their Church against what they held to be the dangerous policy of those who had acquired for the time the upper hand in the Ecclesiastical Courts. It is no wonder that in such an issue the combat waxed hot and fierce.

A new and an even more dramatic incident now gave an even graver aspect to the conflict, and showed how far the leaders of the non-intrusionist party were prepared to carry their assertion of independence. A certain Mr. Edwards had been presented to the parish of Marnock in 1837. He was distasteful to the congregation, and only one signature was obtained to his call. On the instructions of the General Assembly the Presbytery of Strathbogie—a name that lent itself readily enough to the uses of a popular cry, and obtained a half jocular currency for the next generation in consequence — rejected the presentee, and a new nomination was made by the patron. But before the Presbytery proceeded to act upon the new nomination an interdict was served upon them by the Court of Session, and in obedience thereto they resolved to stay proceedings. The matter was brought up at the General Assembly of 1839, and the Presbytery was instructed to suspend all proceedings until the Assembly of the following year. But immediately afterwards the original presentee obtained a judgment in his favour from the Court of Session, which declared that the Presbytery was bound to take him on trial. This edict the Presbytery of Strathbogie, like law-

abiding citizens, proceeded to obey, but the Commission of the Assembly, in the following December, commanded them to desist, and on their refusal passed sentence of suspension from their functions as ministers. It is almost amusing to find that the Commission accompanied this high-handed assertion of a jurisdiction, not only co-ordinate with, but superior to, that of the High Court, with much self-congratulation upon the forbearance which made the sentence one of suspension only and not of deposition.

That any large section of the Established Church could have supposed that such action would be tolerated by the supreme Civil Court is hardly conceivable, if we do not recall the fact that the issue now being fought was one which roused feelings deeply rooted in the hearts of a large body of Scotsmen. The old assertion of ecclesiastical supremacy was buried beneath more than a century of altogether different feelings, during which it seemed to be little but a memory of the past, which no new generation would see revived. But the seed lay deep in the soil, and it was a proof of the tenacity of the Scottish character that the crop sprang up once more, with a vigour and force that took no account of constitutional considerations, or of the fact that its aspirations were inconsistent with the ideas of the day. We may condemn action so high-handed, which visited with the severest ecclesiastical penalties those whose guilt consisted in obeying the law of the land; but we cannot help respecting the boldness of the leaders, and the clear-sighted vigour with which they recognised the real issue. Even the question of patronage as against popular assent was seen to be of lesser account. "It is not the Veto Law we are now considering," said

Dr. Candlish, who moved the sentence of suspension; "it is a thing greatly more radical, vital, and elementary, and of far more permanent and pervading importance to the Church than any single law on its statute-book. The veto is a bagatelle, and but dust in the balance, when compared with the proper independence of our Church in things ecclesiastical." It is impossible to refuse a certain meed of admiration to so bold and unflinching a statement of the question at stake, and it might serve as a more instructive lesson to the Englishman who studies the great ecclesiastical fight of Scotland, and who may turn that lesson to account in a fight that may soon engage his own more immediate attention, if he grasped clearly the fact that the issue was only accidentally one regarding the settlement of ministers, and that its essence lay in the incompatible claims of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It was well that it should be thus fearlessly set forth. We may doubt whether civil or religious liberty would have been of long endurance had the full measure of the claim of the dominant party in the Church been admitted; but we cannot refuse to its leaders the credit of conscientious conviction, and of a bold statement of the authority they claimed.

The sentence of suspension was followed by arrangements under which the functions of the ministry were to be performed by others in place of the suspended ministers. The Court of Session protected these ministers in the use of the parish churches, and interdicted any interference with these. But it did not yet proceed to interdict the holding of services in the district by other ministers. The occasion was used to arouse the feelings of the Highland popula-

tion by a series of those open-air services, which stirred their deepest memories, called forth their highest enthusiasm, and pledged them to a whole-hearted adherence to the cause. The appeal to religious enthusiasm met with a ready response, and it was only natural that those who believed themselves to be the representatives of the martyrs of a former generation should assume, as a part of their creed, a not altogether amiable aspect of superior fervour and loftier morality—an assumption which may easily be accompanied by something of Pharisaical hypocrisy. Their opponents, at least, did not hesitate to ascribe to them such traits, and not the least provocative element in the strife, to those who were maintaining the supremacy of the law, was that the average Englishman, so far as he attended to the dispute at all, took the party of resistance at their own valuation, and conceived that they, and they alone, were animated by motives of conscience and religious duty, and were ready to sacrifice all for their sake. It was only too easily overlooked or forgotten that adherence to constitutional principle had its martyrs also, although the sacrifices were less noisily proclaimed.

But the incidents of the fight developed rapidly. Early in 1840 the Court of Session strengthened the terms of their interdict, and forbade altogether the ministration of the Assembly's representatives in the districts of the suspended ministers. The result was an absolute refusal to obey. "Let no ambiguity rest upon our conduct," said Dr. Chalmers, when this second interdict had been issued. "If the Church command, and the Court countermand, a spiritual service from any of our office-bearers, then it is the duty

of all the ministers and all the members of the Church of Scotland to do precisely as they should have done though no interdict had come across their path." It was suggested that, as a preliminary to asking any alteration of the law from the Legislature, the Church should make submission to the Court. The reply was one of absolute defiance. To do so would be "degrading dereliction of principle." "Be it known to all men," said Chalmers in the Commission of Assembly, "that we shall not retrace one single footstep—we shall make no submission to the Court of Session—and that, not because of the disgrace, but because of the gross and grievous dereliction of principle that we should incur thereby. They may force the ejection of us from our places; they shall never, never force us to the surrender of our principles; and if that honourable Court shall again so far mistake their functions as to repeat or renew the inroads they have already made, we trust they will ever meet with the same reception they have already gotten—to whom we shall give place by subjection, no, not for an hour—no, not by a hair's breadth."

The last interdict remained—as indeed it was inevitable that it should—a dead letter. The issue had now been clearly defined; to throw oil on the flames by the prosecution of many of the leading clergymen because they held services in the proscribed districts would have been little short of madness. The interdict served only to show that by so doing, in the opinion of the Court, they were guilty of acting against the good order of the Church as established. But to visit them with the penalties due for such an offence did not belong to the function of a Civil Court, which would only have made itself ridiculous by trying to enforce them.

The only hope of a settlement lay in some legislative proposal which might reconcile the reasonable claims of the Church with the prerogatives of the Civil Courts. The leaders of the non-intrusion party believed that they might dictate their own terms, and were ready to open negotiations with either party in the State. But it soon appeared that the Whig ministers, although they had encouraged the Veto Act as a plausible concession to popular rights, were unable or unwilling to propose any alteration of the law. The Dissenting influence, as was perhaps not altogether unnatural, were opposed to a concession which would give complete independence to a Church enjoying the material advantages of endowment and establishment. Whatever the reason, the answer of Lord John Russell was explicit: that in the present disagreement of opinion the Government declined to make itself responsible for any measure of relief.

It was to the Conservatives—to whom the changed current of political feeling was fast bringing the certainty of power and office—that Chalmers and his friends now turned. The member of that party through whom the negotiations were chiefly conducted was Lord Aberdeen, and for a time it seemed as if the terms of a Bill might be arranged. The negotiations present an aspect of the crisis less dignified, perhaps we may add, less creditable to all concerned than the more dramatic incidents of the open fight. It would be tedious to discuss in detail the parleyings and the correspondence, by means of which the non-intrusionist party in the Church sought some formula which would retain for them an independent power, and while prescribing a stated course of procedure, should leave one step therein so undefined as to allow them to be

absolutely free; while the Conservative leaders sought to preserve in name the supremacy of the law, while conceding as much as possible to the claims of the Church. Neither side could afford to be very candid; least of all, perhaps, the Conservative politicians, who were not only attempting a task essentially opposed to the main principles of their political creed, and who, from party motives, were perhaps inclined to sacrifice the best interests of the Church, and to betray that party in the Church which might command comparatively little popular support, but were nevertheless bound by the principles upon which alone an Established Church can safely rest. The letters and conferences between both sides became more and more complicated. Charges of bad faith were inevitably made. It could hardly be otherwise when the subtleties of ecclesiastical distinctions were the matter of discussion between those, on the one hand, to whom each variation of expression meant a vital difference of principle, and those, on the other, to whom the whole seemed a sophistical and unmeaning controversy. Step by step it became plain that the *liberum arbitrium* or unfettered discretion which the Church claimed would not be satisfied by anything which demanded that their rejection of a presentee should be based on reasons stated on behalf of the congregation. The Church must not only be free in its judgment: it must be free to suspend or abrogate its judgment if a majority of the congregation announced its dissent. The Presbytery *must* be free to reject merely on the dissent of the congregation; that is to say, the right of the patron was to be at the mercy of any caprice that claimed to be founded on conscience, even if it failed to adduce a single reason for its existence. Between

such a claim and any proposal which a responsible minister could propose there was an insurmountable barrier. The negotiations were fruitless, and they did not end without provoking feelings of distrust and irritation on both sides. Lord Aberdeen introduced a Bill which would certainly have given to the Presbytery ample power to give effect to any reasonable objection of the congregation. Beyond that he would not go, and when he withdrew the Bill in July 1840, it was with expressions of sympathy for the suspended ministers of Strathbogie, and of severe condemnation of those leaders who seemed to be perverting the mind and hazarding the whole position of the Church. These words were echoed by Sir Robert Peel. He regretted that the Bill had not passed; he was willing to concede more of the principle of popular election in the choice of ministers; but any further concession to the independence of ecclesiastical authority he would not give. "The spiritual authority now claimed by the Church of Scotland he believed to be illegal, and he would not for the purpose of conciliation give his support to it." It might have been well had this declaration been made earlier; perhaps not less well, even for the Church itself, had a lingering attachment to the policy of conciliation at the price of surrender of principle not remained as part of the stock-in-trade of the Conservative party.

The negotiations being thus broken off, the fight was renewed with all the greater bitterness, as each party recognised that it was to be war to the bitter end. The contest as to which section was to be dominant—because it became more evident day by day that the Extremists were only one section of the Church—waxed more bold. It had been suggested

that they should give way. We have seen how the suggestion was received. They did not scruple now to claim that the surrender should be made by the law-courts. "It would be no impossible thing, surely," said Chalmers, in his heated reply to the calm words of Peel, "that law has for once in 150 years gone beyond its sphere. Which of the two rival elements, we ask, in all conscience and equity, ought to give way?" So frenzied had he become in the assertion of an impossible claim that, with no thought of the danger to the whole structure of society, he does not hesitate to suggest that the law-courts should surrender the very principle on which they rest, and come in the humble attitude of repentant sinners to crave the pardon of an authority greater than that of law!

The offending Presbytery of Strathbogie, or the seven suspended ministers who constituted the majority, now proceeded to carry out the order of the Court, to admit Mr. Edwards to the charge which was legally his. The scene was one striking and picturesque enough. The enthusiastic mood of the Highland population of the lonely Banffshire village had been raised to the highest state of tension. On the 21st of January 1841, after a severe snowstorm had laid the roads far and near under impassable snow-drifts, the ceremony which they had been taught to believe a sacrilegious profanation of the sacred office was performed. In spite of the difficulties, a crowd of some thousands had gathered, and densely filled the church. The legal agents on each side had a preliminary skirmish as to the manner of procedure. Formal protests were put in, and the ministers who were obeying the orders of the Supreme Court were plainly told that they could claim no spiritual alle-

giance from their people, and that they were about to perform an act involving "the most heinous guilt and fearful responsibility." Having made this protest, the congregation, with a dramatic effect all the more striking because it was unstudied, trooped in a body from the church which they were never to enter again.

The scene was changed when the Assembly met in May of the same year. Then the outraged congregation were to have their revenge, and a dominant majority, who were now careless of the lengths to which rebellion might lead them, were determined to pass upon the offending ministers the severest ecclesiastical penalty. There was no hesitation as to the course to be pursued. The appeal that the ministers had acted according to their conscientious sense of duty was summarily brushed aside. Conscience was no excuse for stubborn contumacy or for proud and rebellious defiance. So spoke Chalmers on the eve of the most marked insult that could have been perpetrated on the first principles of the law. But for either side in such a contest to throw overboard the plea of conscience is a dangerous abandonment of what both may sometimes need as their excuse. The sitting was excited and prolonged, and only at three o'clock in the morning, after a dignified protest from the ministers accused, was sentence of deposition pronounced. It was, no doubt, a solemn and effective episode in the drama, and one which might well mark the stern issues of the contest; but the offending ministers in no way lost their status. Like the issue of another well-known curse, "nobody was one penny the worse."

The minority in the Church—or at least those who,

in the heated eagerness of men who knew no measure in their resistance to the law, appeared to be the minority—were now fully determined to reassert what they believed to be the constitutional order of their Church. They had felt no sympathy with the strained assertion of popular interference in the settlement of ministers. They believed that such interference was often mischievous, and not rarely capricious and ill-grounded. But they had declined the contest on the special point, which admitted of difference of opinion, and was, after all, a matter of degree. Now a larger question was at stake. The freedom and independence of every member of the Church could be maintained only so long as the majesty of the law was supreme above the fierce and unruly elements that intrude into ecclesiastical debates. A contest might have arisen at the moment, had a protest been lodged which the majority were prepared to refuse. To have provoked battle on that issue might not only have led to disruption, it might have forced the hands of the State, and led it to treat the whole Church as irreclaimably rebellious.

At the moment when the fight was at its fiercest, a counter-stroke was dealt by the Court of Session. The Moderator announced that a messenger-at-arms was at the door to present an interdict against the deposition. The position was critical. To have refused to receive it would have brought every member of the Assembly within the reach of the law. The interdict was ordered to lie on the table, and a series of resolutions declared it to be a breach of the privileges of the Church.

The Whig Government had now to deal with an unexampled state of matters. The Prime Minister was questioned on the subject, and while declining to pro-

pose any alteration of the law, he declared that steps would be taken to enforce the law and to protect those who obeyed it. But no such steps were taken. The loudest and boldest party in the Church were likely to have the most influence at an election, and a tottering Government could not afford to alienate their support. Such temporising, however, won them no respect. The assertors of the Church's claims could with reason complain "that the Government had neither the candour to concede these claims nor the boldness to repudiate them."

An attempt—which found some favour in the eyes of the Whigs—had again been made in the way of legislation. The Duke of Argyle had introduced a Bill in May, which conceded the veto, but fenced it only by providing that it could be set aside if it were proved to have been set in motion from factious or capricious motives. That Bill conceded so much that the extreme party in the Church were ready to give it their support. But it met with keen opposition in the House of Lords, and before it proceeded further Sir Robert Peel had become Minister, and, in the election which ensued, became the head of a powerful majority. The opposite party in the Church now found their hopes raised, and appealed to the Government, with no uncertain voice, to restore her discipline. "They are fully persuaded"—so their memorial ran—"that because sufficient care has not been taken to guard against the cherishing of delusive and unconstitutional expectations, matters have reached in Scotland the fearful crisis to which they have now attained." They demanded from the Government a declaration which should admit of no dispute, which party in the Church was to be held by the legislature as constituting the Established Church.

The lists were now clearly marked out. "The war of argument is now over," said Dr. Chalmers at the Commission in August: "the strife of words must give place to the strife of opposing deeds and opposing purposes." "Be it known unto all men," he proceeded, "that we have no wish for a disruption, but neither stand we in overwhelming dread of it. We have no ambition, as has pleasantly been said of us, for martyrdoms of any sort, but neither will we shrink from the hour or the day of trial."

It is plain that, long before these words could have been uttered, a "disruption" was contemplated as the probable issue of the fight. Already measures were in operation for covering the march to a separate camp. Much in the circumstances favoured the plans of the seceders. The resources of the country had greatly increased. They were chiefly in the hands of the captains of commerce in the large cities, and the great majority of these were strongly under the influence of the leaders of the more restless and active party in the Church. Relatively to the wealth of the country, the endowments assigned to the Church had become more and more meagre. Of the landed classes, not a few, estranged by the attacks on their powers as patrons, and weary of continual strife, were showing sympathies with the Episcopalian Church. The standard of living traditional in the Scottish Church was not extravagant, and no unmeasured liberality was required to provide the scanty competence that would suffice to secure the out-going ministers against actual starvation. None the less the determination to face the risk commands admiration and respect. It was not made without some hesitation. For a moment it seemed as if before the final plunge a settlement might still be reached, and negotia-

tions were opened with the Government through the medium of Sir George Sinclair. They proved abortive, as the Government could not concede the terms that were demanded. The final scenes were hastening on.

In the beginning of 1842 a new movement was begun. If no settlement between Church and State were possible, it might still be hoped that an actual change of the law, for the abolition of patronage, might sweep out of the way the whole foundation of the strife. This proposal was now put forward with the support of Chalmers in the Presbytery of Edinburgh. It could hardly have been supposed that a Conservative Government could agree to such a proposal. To do so would have been to betray the party in the Church who had stood by the constitutional relation between Church and State, and would have delivered them over to a system against which they had striven in obedience to the law, and which they believed to be fraught with evil to the Church. The advocacy of the proposal involved a change of front on the part of those who had passed the Veto Act, and Chalmers himself could not escape the accusation of inconsistency. It unmasked—so opponents might well allege—the real object of those who had insisted upon a veto power in the congregation which was to be a check upon the evils of patronage, but not a substitution of popular election in its place. It was in marked opposition to the whole attitude which he had assumed as regards the limits of popular power, and shows how far he had departed from the spirit that made him the decided opponent of the Reform Bill. It was one thing to ask that patronage should not override religious scruples : it was quite another thing to say that the initiative in nominating ministers should pass entirely into the hands of an un-

educated crowd. But ecclesiastical battling is a process through which few men pass without giving ground for a charge of inconsistency. No one would advance against Chalmers the accusation of conscious tergiversation; but it is impossible not to admit that his progress along the dangerous path of resistance to the law had made him the supporter of much from which in earlier days he would have shrunk.

It is not the business of a secular history to trace in minute detail each incident of the ecclesiastical struggle. The history of Strathbogie had its counterpart elsewhere; but the new instances added nothing material to the issues at stake. The Government held firmly—and wisely—to the position that the law must be maintained, and declined to introduce any legislative proposal. The time for concession was gone, and so clearly was the ultimate result foreseen that some of those who had adhered to the extreme party now separated themselves from it, and were willing to accept a measure on the lines of Lord Aberdeen's rejected Bill. To this the Government were not unwilling to listen, but the fear that defection from their party might increase only precipitated the action of the extreme advocates of spiritual independence. They now determined to put forward a Claim of Right, which it was clear that neither the Government would for one moment consent, nor respect for the law admit, and to adopt this as the charter of their new Church.

The Claim of Right was drawn up in anticipation of the Assembly of 1842, which was destined to be—and which it was indeed foreseen must be—the last of the unbroken Church. Never were the assertions of the supreme authority of the Church, within its

own domain, put forward with more unhesitating boldness. It was soon evident that all half measures were discarded, and that the only aim was to add decision to the declarations of the Church, and to obtain for them the support of sweeping majorities. The exclusion of the deposed ministers of Strathbogie was upheld—in spite of an interdict from the Court of Session—by an overwhelming number of voices. The resolution for the abolition of patronage passed with as full assent. The Assembly took pride—perhaps those who contemplated the abandonment of their benefices found special satisfaction—in the proofs that could be adduced that the liberality of her adherents was never more generous than it had been in these years of excitement and strain. The chief topic, however, which threw all others into the shade, was the Claim of Rights. This asserted, in no dubious terms, the co-ordinate jurisdiction of the Church Courts, and traced it as founded upon her history, and as confirmed by her contract with the State. It was defended by Chalmers in words that left no ambiguity as to the position which was claimed —a position which might well rouse the enthusiasm of those who could disregard the paramount supremacy of the law as the fundamental basis of society, and who could see no danger to civil and religious liberty, of which that paramountcy is the sole effectual guarantee. It was carried by a majority of more than two to one, and it was transmitted to the Crown as the final offer of an independent jurisdiction, deigning to treat with a usurping power, rather than as the appeal of subjects of the State to its sovereign authority. We may recognise its boldness, and the earnest enthusiasm of its supporters, even while we are con-

vinced that its concession would have involved the confusion of every constitutional principle.

Before the close of the year, and before the Claim of Right came to the arbitrament of Parliament, the party which now held itself to be the only true representative of the principles of the Church, met in Convocation at Edinburgh to arrange for the final steps in its plan of campaign. It was an occasion of great solemnity, and they did not fall below the dignity of the occasion. A spirit of stern resolution as well as of earnest devotion pervaded all their proceedings, and none knew better than Chalmers how to grace the solemn gathering with all the power of a convincing eloquence. But it was apparent also that the spirit of organisation was not lacking, and that abundant preparation had been made for arranging the material resources by which the campaign was to be maintained. The completeness of the scheme for a provision which was to take the place of the surrendered benefices was well fitted to reassure the faint-hearted or the hesitating. The Convocation parted secure of adequate support, not only from a large body of the clergy, but from at least a fair, if not a preponderating, proportion of the wealthier laymen of the country.

It remained only that the Claim of Right should be subjected to the judgment of Parliament. It had already been dealt with in a letter from Sir James Graham as Home Secretary, in which he exposed the incompatibility of the Claim with the supremacy of the Civil Courts, and declined on the part of the Government to intervene. On the 7th of March 1843 Mr. Fox Maule proposed the appointment of a committee to inquire into the grievances of the

Church. Many Scottish members supported the motion, and found nothing to object to in the claims put forward. But such was not the determination of Parliament. From both sides of the House—from Lord John Russell no less than from Sir Robert Peel—the demands were denounced as unconstitutional and incapable of being entertained. "My belief is," said Sir Robert Peel, "that such claims, if you were to concede them, would be unlimited in their extent. They could not be limited to the Church of Scotland. . . . My belief is that there is abroad, both in this country and in Scotland, and in other countries, after a long series of religious contentions and neglect of the duties of religion, a spirit founded upon just views in connection with the subject. But I hope that, in effecting this object, an attempt will not be made to establish a spiritual or ecclesiastical supremacy above the other tribunals of the country, and that in conjunction with increased attention to the duties of religion the laws of the country will be maintained. If the House of Commons is prepared to depart from those principles on which the Reformation was founded, and which principles are essential to the maintenance of the civil and religious liberties of the country, nothing but evil would result, the greatest evil of which would be the establishment of religious domination, which would alike endanger the religion of the country and the civil rights of man." The motion was defeated by 241 votes to 76; but the Scottish members voted as two to one in its favour.

The Church had now received that answer that she demanded; and it was of a character for which those who had recently commanded the majority in

her Courts were fully prepared. Their course was now clear. A piecemeal resignation, or one which would not have enabled them to assume the formal aspect of a deliberate separation of the great body of the Church from a State which had broken its side of the contract, would not have suited their purpose. But an opportunity was soon to be given them for an exodus of another kind, and it was prepared with ample deliberation, and in a manner calculated to give it the most striking and dramatic effect.

The General Assembly met in May 1843. Men's minds were in the keenest state of excitement; and however solemn the occasion, excitement kept alive by a carefully studied scene, of which the incidents were planned beforehand, cannot fail to have its ludicrous side. The leaders were well aware of their power. They had secured pledges which could not be broken without sinking irrevocably the characters of those who had given them. In many parts of the country the pressure of the seceding party was irresistibly strong, and the ministers had often to choose between leaving their benefices, and thus securing a right to a share in the sustentation which private liberality had promised, and holding their benefices against an overwhelming opinion in the district which held that to do so would amount to a surrender of all religious principle—with the prospect, also, of ministering in churches without a congregation. Without lessening the credit due to conscientious conviction, we may well suppose that such pressure was not without its effect. The outgoing party was also sustained by wide sympathy from those beyond the pale of the Church, and even beyond the limits of Scotland, who not unnaturally looked only at the

obvious sacrifices that were faced, and gave generous credit to an heroic act of independence. There were others who took a less flattering view, and who were inclined to see as much of melodrama as of tragedy in the scene that was about to be enacted. There were many who saw in it a presage of great evil for Scotland, when a middle-class Puritanism, and a covenanting spirit adapted to the conditions of the nineteenth century, might kill out the blither and freer mood that had reigned when the century was young, and might alienate much that linked Scotland with the highest intellectual efforts of the time, and made her for a generation at least the centre of poetry and romance. Some calmed their fears by proclaiming that the exodus would be small; and their falsified prophecies were afterwards recalled as influences which misled the Government. The last allegation may safely be dismissed. No Government could have satisfied claims which in their very essence were inconsistent with the supremacy of civil law.

According to the usual custom, the meeting of the General Assembly was preceded by the levee at Holyrood Palace of the Lord High Commissioner, who attended the meetings as the representative of Her Majesty. The Marquis of Bute was the Lord High Commissioner for the year, and in anticipation of the coming scene, which was to make of this an historic occasion, the levee was unusually crowded. It was afterwards recalled as an odd and ominous incident, that while the levee proceeded, the portrait of William III. fell heavily to the floor, and caused a bystander to cry out, "There goes the Revolution Settlement." With his usual military escort, and all the pomp and display that made the day an annual

holiday, the Commissioner proceeded to the High Church, where the preliminary service was held, and there listened, with such edification as was in the circumstances possible, to a discourse from the retiring Moderator—a keen partisan of the seceding party, who did not fail to improve the opportunity which his occupation of the pulpit gave him. Meanwhile a vast crowd had packed the Assembly Hall since dawn, and had patiently awaited the scene which was about to be enacted, and the parts for which were cast with the same care as for a theatrical performance. After the usual opening prayer, and in an atmosphere charged with an electric current of curiosity, of anxiety, and of enthusiasm, the retiring Moderator, instead of "constituting" the Court and proceeding to the election of his successor, read a protest resisting the invasion of the Church's rights, and summoning all who were faithful to her cause to withdraw and meet elsewhere. Having finished, he left the hall, followed by more than four hundred ministers, who then severed their connection with the National Church. Falling into line, they formed a long procession through the crowded street to another hall that had been prepared for their reception. The scene was one that could hardly have been witnessed without emotion, even by those who knew that it was carefully rehearsed, and who might suspect the perfect sincerity of the martyrdom, and might still more confidently condemn the principles upon which it rested. The seceding ministers left amidst the cheers of the enthusiastic, amidst the tears of those who mourned the breach in the National Church, and amidst the smiles, it must be admitted, of not a few, whose laughter was, perhaps, stirred

not by mere derision, but by the solemn guise of enthusiastic heroism which religious contentions, conscientiously no doubt, but sometimes mistakenly, assume.

In a hall at Canonmills which had been prepared for the occasion, another vast crowd was gathered to welcome the seceding ministers. A Moderator of the new Assembly had to be chosen, and for the office the new body had a splendid nomination open to them. By acclamation Dr. Chalmers, whose genius had illustrated the whole progress of the controversy, whose unconquerable energy had given organisation to the new Church, and whose brilliant eloquence had impressed the cause upon the heart of the nation, was called to the chair. He opened the proceedings by prayer, and by selecting for praise one of those Psalms which in the metrical version have for ages moved the Scottish people :—

> "O send Thy Light forth and Thy Truth,
> Let them be guides to me :
> And bring me to Thine holy hill,
> Even where Thy dwellings be."

Not even those who most doubted the wisdom of the Secession; not even those who condemned most severely the methods by which it had been brought about; nay, not even those who might sneer at what they deemed to be the mock heroics of its martyrdom, could deny to the new Church the credit of a solemn, an enthusiastic, and a dignified opening scene.

The exodus was indeed a great and memorable one, and under its shock the Church might well reel and stagger. Let it be remembered what her position was, before we admit that all the honour of courageous

adherence to conscience lay on the side of those who now shook her dust from off their shoes. She had no imposing political influence. She had often experienced the deception born of trust in the landed aristocracy of Scotland, many of whom had grown rich upon her ancient possessions, and yet grudged her ministers a scanty pittance. Amidst the contentions of political factions her position as an Establishment might easily disappear, while the great and wealthy Anglican Establishment might look with indifference on the fate of a Church alien to herself in many points both of government and doctrine. She could not count upon anything but opposition from at least one great party in the State, and only feeble support from the other; and to many Englishmen it seemed as if, in an obscure and entangled ecclesiastical contest, into the merits of which they disdained to enter, the Church of Scotland had played the less heroic part. The stream of private liberality was flowing in the direction of the new Church; and those who remained within the pale of the Establishment might think they had done all that could be expected of them in adhering to her, and that a Church which had clung to its endowments required no liberal aid from voluntary resources. Their position had nothing to rouse popular sympathy or to kindle popular enthusiasm—indeed the topic on which the battle of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction had been fought, was one in which they had distinctly chosen the unpopular side. Yet we must be forgiven for believing that the courage and the steadfastness which kept the remnant faithful to the principle of Establishment, and accepted the only terms upon which Establishment was constitutionally possible, were qualities which deserved well

of their country, and which proved in the result of inestimable advantage to her. Without that courage, Scotland must necessarily have become much more distinctly and widely separated from England than was actually the case. Had disestablishment come, not as the result of political changes, but as the result of an obstinate and perverse resistance to the only possible terms on which the State could suffer an Establishment to continue — then, without question, after the first burst of admiration for a stalwart resistance had spent itself, Scotland would have been regarded as divided by a wide gulf from the dominant constitutional views of the sister country. As it was, the Church had to see herself politically in a minority within her own borders. She had to see the rapid growth of a certain stern and repressive code of manners and of religious doctrine, which swayed a large part of her population, judged severely those who fell short of a standard which they believed narrow, bigoted, and discouraging to some of the best instincts of the people, and which, combined with the tendency of concentration at the English metropolis, helped to destroy the high position which Scotland had won for herself as a literary centre. In the eyes of these more enthusiastic opponents, the adherents of the Church were deemed to be latitudinarian in doctrine, unduly lax in their conduct, overoccupied with secular pursuits, and too inclined to cultivate sympathy with the Anglican Establishment. On the morrow of a great religious "trek" such things are very naturally suspected by those who are moved by the absorbing enthusiasm of the moment. Those against whom the accusations were brought might endure them, in the consciousness that they were

maintaining an attitude which did in the end redound to the good of Scotland.

About four hundred and fifty out of twelve hundred of her ministers had left the Church. It would be wrong to deny that to many this involved a severing of ties that were part of their lives, and that suffering and privation were the lot of some. As a solace to these afflictions they indulged to the full in the most bitter denunciation, and the most contemptuous ridicule of those who remained. The position of an Established Church minister was one which for years called for the exercise of much patience and much fortitude. To attend the parish church was, in many places, held to be a sign of lax conduct, and of open irreligion. On the other hand, the outgoers had the sympathy of many in all parts of the world. From America and from Ireland there came material help. The newly enriched commercial classes found their contributions repaid by a rich tribute of admiration, influence, and respect, which did not improve their moral tone, and which gave to the ensuing generation a large and powerful body in whose character attention to worldly prosperity and obtrusive religious professions were oddly blended. The Protestant Churches abroad, readily and without any very careful investigation, accepted the view that in the Free Church alone were to be found the representatives of Scottish independence and of Scottish religious feeling. "Apart from Christianity altogether," said Chalmers in his opening address, in words that, to a calm retrospect, appear to savour a little too much of self-congratulation, "there has been realised a joyfulness of heart, *a proud swelling of conscious integrity*, when a conquest has been effected by the higher over the

inferior powers of our nature, and so amongst Christians, too, there is a legitimate glorying, as when the disciples of old gloried in the midst of their tribulation, and when the spirit of glory and of God rested on them, they were made partakers of the Divine nature, and escaped the corruption that is in the world." Whatever might be the lot of the humbler followers, the leaders of the new Church might add to this consciousness of self-righteousness, the fact that they at least were no losers, even in a worldly point of view, by the change.

But, on the other hand, one point in the declaration which was most emphatically insisted on by the Free Church was that they supported the principle of an Established Church as against that of voluntaryism. "The Voluntaries mistake us if they conceive us to be Voluntaries," said Dr. Chalmers in his opening address in the Canonmills Hall. "Though we quit the Establishment, we go out on the Establishment principle; we quit a vitiated Establishment, we would rejoice in returning to a pure one. To express it otherwise—we are the advocates for a national recognition, and national support of religion—and we are not Voluntaries."

No declaration could be more emphatic, more careful, or more distinct. It indicated, indeed, the great error of which those had been guilty who had brought about the breach. None had spoken words of more unreserved praise of Establishment than had Dr. Chalmers, and his most eloquent pleas in its favour had been urged before an English audience, and in defence of the Anglican Establishment, from which this element of popular election was far more completely banished, and where the principle of the civil

supremacy was far more thoroughly recognised than would have tallied with the views of any party in the Church of Scotland. But step by step, he and others with him had advanced to a position from which they could not retreat, and in which they were almost forced to the extreme measure of secession. With all the success that attended the Sustentation Scheme, of which he was himself the chief organiser, Chalmers, during the four years that ensued before his death, continued to feel the same distrust of the voluntary principle. He did not cease to lament that the breach between his Church and the State had become inevitable; he did not cease to feel that voluntaryism, however necessary to those who could not conscientiously accept the terms of the State, was but a poor substitute for the great benefit which a State Church might confer. The only terms on which he could accept that bond were those which pledged the State—not as a matter of expediency, but as a matter of publicly-avowed faith—to support the Church, not because it was the Church of the majority, or because it was the Church of history and tradition, but because it was implicitly believed to be the only true Church — to which it was ready to commit supreme power in all ecclesiastical matters. These terms were refused, but Chalmers nevertheless fell back upon voluntaryism as a sorry substitute. After all the triumphant success of the new Church, he could only say: "My hopes of an extended Christianity from the efforts of voluntaryism alone have *not* been brightened by my experience since the Disruption." But the logic of facts was too strong for Chalmers and his followers. They were forced, as a means of strengthening their own position, to seek

alliance with the dissenting bodies beyond the borders of Scotland, whose principles were voluntary. They found there a sympathy with the spirit in which they regarded religion, and they found there also a social stratum more akin to their own. Bit by bit they moved into closer connection with the dissenting spirit, and a generation had scarcely passed before a large portion, and what soon became an overwhelming majority, of their number were to be found in the ranks of the Liberationists. Only last year the emphatic words of Chalmers were deprecated as a mere chance utterance, not worthy of attention, instead of the distinct enunciation of a principle, in support of which the main efforts of his life had been given. Such dereliction of tenets, once ardently held, can hardly escape condemnation, even under the pressure of a motive so strong as that presented by the hope of out-numbering the Establishment by union with the third great Presbyterian body in Scotland, whose principles had always been avowedly those of voluntaryism.

The Church herself was destined to undergo a similar change. In the year 1874, when the heat of the struggle had passed away, when the spirit of animosity had largely died out, and when the sternness of the religious spirit which had at first characterised the Free Church had faded before the influences born in a new generation, an attempt was made to bring about a reconciliation by conceding the principle of popular election. The Free Church had found that the supremacy of the Civil Courts could assert itself even within the pale of a disestablished Church, and a lawsuit which stirred the bitterest feelings, and had seemed to involve an invasion of her dearly-purchased

liberties, had proved that her contracts were subject to interpretation by the Civil Courts, and that her ministers could appeal to these Courts for redress of what they held to be wrongs, however much these wrongs were founded upon supposed religious sanction. Thus baffled in a new attempt to create an ecclesiastical independence, it was fancied that she might be willing to be brought, by a large concession, back to the pale of the Church. A Conservative Government did that for which in the earlier stages of the struggle even the Extreme party had not been prepared, and abolished patronage in the Church. Not only so, but by making disputed settlements matters to be determined only by the Courts of the Church, the statute seemed to bar the way against any collision between these and the Civil Courts. Whether a statute, so violently opposed to all the principles which the Conservative party in the Church had advocated for more than a century and a half, has been for the advantage of the Church, is a matter on which doubts are not only legitimate, but perhaps well-founded. Many may deem that the arts that please a popular electorate are scarcely those that dignify religion, or contribute to raise her ministers in popular esteem; and some may even deem that an extension of the powers of Ecclesiastical Courts may place an undue and unwholesome power in the hands of the leaders of ecclesiastical parties. However that may be, there can be no question that this surrender on the part of the Conservative party absolutely failed to bring about any healing of the breach, if it did not, indeed, lead to some recrudescence of animosity. It may be boldly asserted that if such a surrender had taken place at an earlier stage, it would have made of the Established Church, not that

moderating influence which did so much for Scotland during thirty very crucial years, but would have converted it into a pale imitation of its rival. That it was delayed until such a fate became impossible was an advantage, not a loss. The framers of that measure congratulated themselves that by its help the Church was saved. But the worth of that congratulation must be measured by the nearness of the danger which they deemed themselves to have averted; and as to this it is permissible to feel some doubts.

One other matter which powerfully affected the future of the Free Church came into prominence before Chalmers' death in 1847. The Government of Sir Robert Peel fell in June 1846, after the Conservative party had been rent by the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Whig Government which succeeded them at once made a step forward in the Education question, by producing minutes which offered grants for the maintenance of schools—those previously offered being only for school building. The condition on which grants were to be given was that the schools should be in connection with *some* religious denomination. Chalmers recoiled from a measure which he thought to savour more of indifference than of toleration, and he would even have preferred an avowedly secular system. But he did not think it wise for the Free Church to refuse participation in such grants; and acting on his advice the Free Church accepted these grants, which approached very closely to a State endowment of religion, and thus separated herself openly from the action of the Voluntaries in Scotland. That position she maintained down to the passing of the Education Act in 1872.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

In the preceding chapter we have followed the main phases of this great ecclesiastical contest, which absorbed so much of the attention of Scotland during the second quarter of the century, and which, coinciding, as it did, with social and political changes of the most far-reaching kind, served so powerfully to determine her future position. Its full significance is seen only when we compute its influence as combined with these social and political changes. The course of politics in Scotland since the Reform Act of 1832 has been somewhat curious. That Act had not merely been a large step forward in political development: for good or for ill, it had revolutionised the country. From a small privileged class, nursed in traditions and encrusted with an impenetrable coating of prejudice, political influence suddenly passed to the middle class, the only class recognising its own importance in the balance of forces that were to shape the nation's future. As compared with its counterpart in England, that middle class was fairly educated, fairly intelligent, with more than competent appreciation of political principle. But it possessed, just as strongly as those who were higher in the social scale, the national characteristics

of pertinacious adherence to its opinions, and of that inherent conservatism which refuses to be shaken from the mood and attitude of mind to which it has become accustomed. For more than a generation a conviction of the necessity for drastic reform had been firmly maintained by a large body of opinion in Scotland, and that opinion had gradually spread until it obtained a firm hold upon the vast majority of middle-class Scotsmen. For at least two generations Scotsmen had inherited from their fathers a dogged determination to fight for that reform; and they had become so imbued with it as the main object of national effort that they were not likely to be shaken out of it by any sudden gust of reactionary opinion. The doctrines of Whiggism came, to the great mass of the nation, to wear the strength of a religious conviction inherited from their fathers, any dereliction of which would be a sort of national apostasy; and it has required more than two generations to break this deeply rooted impression.

But the profound alteration in all existing traditions did not end with this deep and enduring conviction on the part of the great majority of the nation. It opened the flood of a much more revolutionary feeling that for the moment terrified the Whig party, and took away the breath of the small clique that had fancied itself the sole representative of the reforming spirit, and the chosen repository of political wisdom and political morality. A large part of the stock-in-trade of that clique had consisted of denunciation of those who had so long held it in subjection, and who had certainly laid themselves open to a fair charge of narrow-minded and bigoted Toryism. But the little party of the Whigs was hardly prepared to ride upon

the crest of the popular wave. Jeffrey was an active, versatile, and sprightly controversialist. Long years of opposition—to all appearance hopeless—had not inured him or his party to the responsibilities of power, and had not taught them to measure the strength of the contending currents. In some respects they had acted with singular tactlessness. They had fancied themselves superior to the more marked peculiarities of the national temperament. They had affected a thin veneer of English sentiment, had sought to break down the barriers of Scottish idiosyncrasies, and had, even in the minor matters of dialect and of manner, striven to efface what they thought to be marks of provincialism, only because these marks had been rigorously maintained by their political opponents. Jeffrey, according to the caustic critic already quoted, had "lost his broad Scotch and acquired narrow English," and the same affectation was found in more than one of his associates—very distinctly in Andrew Rutherford, who became the Whig Lord Advocate a few years later, and whose solid abilities were somewhat disguised by this little peculiarity. An even more serious error was committed by that party when they fought against any distinct Scottish administration, and did their best to make it a mere branch of English official management. This error, it is true, they soon repented, and strove to undo; but it was no easy task to recover that independence which had been surrendered, and they never succeeded in undoing the work of which, in blind opposition to political antagonists, they had made themselves the agents. If they ever hoped that, as a Whig party, they would gather into their hands such power and influence as had once been wielded

by Henry Dundas, they were doomed to condign and well-deserved disappointment.

But whatever was their influence or their power of becoming permanent leaders of a new and larger political party, it was to Jeffrey and his immediate associates that the task fell of carrying out the work of change which was the immediate and necessary result of the great shifting of political power in 1832. These immediate changes followed, as they were bound to follow, the course of English legislation. Parliamentary reform and burgh reform in Scotland were mere incidents in the changes wrought both in England and in Scotland by the downfall of the Tory supremacy, and no great credit was gained by the Whigs for the manner in which they were carried out. Jeffrey had not the talents which would have enabled him to acquire a great Parliamentary position, even had he not entered Parliament at a period of life too late to let him learn the tactics of a Parliamentary leader. When he retired from the arena, the guidance of the Whig party was left to Parliamentary henchmen such as Kennedy of Dunure, whose pragmatic reiteration of a few threadbare political principles—unillumined by eloquence, unenlivened by imagination, unenlightened by any width of sympathy or any largeness of grasp—might have fitted them in the English arena to fill at most the position of Parliamentary under-secretaries with respectable industry, and with unswerving devotion to routine.

Such men accepted with submission the inferior part they had to play as the nominees of English ministers. They had no overweening ambitions, and it did not suggest itself to them that a bold line of Scottish policy might shape to Scottish needs and

Scottish peculiarities the wave of advancing politics which was passing over the country. Great schemes of social amelioration had no meaning for them. Certain well-ascertained anomalies were to be denounced, largely because they were relics of the past, but chiefly because they afforded palpable proofs of Tory abuses. The chief article in their political creed was that which recognised no possible evil greater than that which could be covered by the name of Tory, but a scarcely less fundamental article was that which repudiated the dangerous and fantastic dreaming which was connoted by the name of Radical. It was not an inspiring, but it was a compact and comfortable compendium of political philosophy. All the rugged picturesqueness of national character, all that was romantic in the national genius, all the storm and pressure of the national spirit seemed to have vanished from the scene under the domination of the little professional clique that managed to capture the spirit of Scottish middle-class ascendency, and that bequeathed to it a dogged adherence to Whiggism that was to last to the end of the century.

But with all their limitations this little clique showed marked skill in their business. They had no strong sympathy with the national spirit; but they found the obstinate tenacity of the Scottish disposition an admirable safeguard against any sudden reversal of the political tendency of the day. They were separated by a great gulf from the old spirit of Scottish ecclesiasticism, but they were able to use for their own purposes the revival of the Covenanting spirit, in a middle-class dress, which preached a theory of ecclesiastical domination impossible in the nineteenth century, and which created out of that spirit

a new sect in which the new electorate found its safest anchorage. In spirit and in tone it was absolutely estranged from the austere and repressive code of social ethics which that sect inculcated; but yet the convivial habits of the Parliament House formed no bar to a satisfactory alliance between the Whig politicians and the fervid ecclesiasticism of the Free Church. Sarcasm will spare, if only because of the amusement it excites, the edifying faith which found a stoup of Free Church orthodoxy in Fox Maule, the force of whose expletives and the freedom of whose life from the restraints of asceticism remain as lively traditions amongst the older memories of Scotsmen who can still recall these days. The Whigs of the Parliament House found useful allies in the Free Church circles, from whose distinctive tenets they were widely divided; and the Free Church leaders found useful patrons amongst men whose laxer code they could condone in return for their common opposition to the Church. If the pact suited both parties the outsider need not visit it with any severity of condemnation. A large class of laymen, enriched by the new commercial prosperity, and glad to find any counterpoise to the old aristocratic domination, found in the new Church a congenial field for the exercise of their patronage, and in the new political conditions a safe buttress of their freshly acquired influence.

But it was only a natural result that under such a regime the wheel of legislative change did not move with any great celerity. After the Act for Burgh Reforms Scottish politics showed little advance, except in the direction of securing for the Whig clique the material advantages of political supremacy. When the swing of the pendulum brought back a

majority of Conservatives to the Imperial Parliament the Scottish Liberal majority was affected in its size by the reaction, but it did not disappear; and the action of the Conservative Government in relation to the Disruption completed the severance between that party and the middle class of Scotland. It is curious that the most important piece of legislation about the middle of the century—the Scottish Poor Law of 1845—was accomplished by the Conservatives, and marked a break with traditional Scottish usage. That break was resented by none more than by Chalmers, who had all his life striven against a compulsory poor rate. It was in 1840 that the question began to assume a new aspect in Scotland. Hitherto the absence of a compulsory and universal assessment for the poor had been the pride of Scotland and the envy of England. Even now strong arguments could be adduced in its favour. The compulsory assessment had been adopted only in the most populous parishes. There were 236 assessed against 643 non-assessed parishes, but the population of the first was 1,178,280, that of the second only 1,137,646. But though the amount of population in each group was thus nearly balanced, the expenditure in the assessed parishes was £91,000, against £48,000 in the non-assessed. Chalmers still hoped, and hoped to the end, that by moral influences, by reviving the spirit of brotherhood, by stimulating Christian liberality through the Church, above all by so dividing districts as to create a new and more vigorous personal interest in the work, the necessity for the vast machinery of a statutory support of the poor might be avoided, and the proud independence of the Scottish spirit be maintained. He preached, he lectured, he wrote in its favour; he sought for

sympathy and aid; he strove to stem the wave of advancing opinion. Amongst others he addressed Carlyle, and received from him a cordial but a doubting letter, in which he hinted that the scheme was "a noble hoping against hope, a noble, strenuous determination to gather from the dry deciduous tree what the green alone could yield." "With a Chalmers in every parish much might be possible! But alas!—" Facts were too strong for him: a crowded population, an eager race for wealth, the pent-up miseries of towns crushed by the Juggernaut of keen competition, imperiously demanded remedies of a drastic kind, even if they tampered with old traditions and undermined old independence. The change was rendered necessary, very much in consequence of the ecclesiastical severance in which he had been the predominant agent. Had the Church remained united she might have retained the command of that Christian liberality which was so abundant at this time, and this might have helped her to cope with the greatest of social problems, and might have postponed for another generation the compulsory assessment from which he shrank, and which he deemed likely to sap the spirit of independence in the nation. But that the measure should have been forced upon the Conservative party shows how deeply the social change had worked. The powers of the Church were crippled, and the liberality which might have aided her in the task found other more immediate outlets for its exercise. Scotland was compelled to follow in the wake of England, and to admit a universal system of assessment which it had been her boast to have escaped when its abuses were most evident in England. The old days were gone, in which Chalmers less than twenty years before had

been able single-handed to cope with the pauperism of a vast parish in Glasgow, where the conditions of life were at their hardest.

But other influences told in the same direction besides the accident of the ecclesiastical breach. The social conditions of Scotland were undergoing a vast change, which worked altogether independently of the little political parties that seemed to themselves to guide the course of events. The population was beginning to increase by leaps and bounds. Manufactures and the wealth that they produced were advancing as they had never advanced before. The balance of influence was passing into the hands of the commercial class. Parliament House might still appear to rule, but only because the now influential class was occupied with other things. The next important piece of legislation—which lies beyond the period with which we are now dealing—the Rutherford Act of 1848, so called from the Lord Advocate of the day, marks a much more decided change in the system of land tenure, so far as hereditary rights were concerned, than any that had yet been made. We have already seen how entailed estates, upon which so much of the permanence of a landed aristocracy must depend, had first been recognised in Scottish law only in 1685; and how subsequent legislation in 1770 and again in 1824 had limited the restrictions upon entailed proprietors, and enabled them to burden the estate with debt for necessary improvements. But the restrictions which remained were felt to be a check upon the growth of agriculture, and to fetter unduly the exchange of the largest and most stable commodity. That commodity must now be made to conform more closely to the laws which regulated

other sources of wealth. The principal provision of the Rutherford Act was that which enabled the entailed proprietor to disentail his land with the consent of one or more of the next heirs of entail. Subsequent legislation, in 1875 and 1882, has further extended this principle; and an entailed proprietor may now disentail upon paying to the next heirs the estimated value of their expectancies. Whatever the intention of the Act, there can be no doubt as to its inevitable effect in preventing the permanent identification of landed property with an hereditary aristocracy.

But however important might be the effect of political and legislative changes in the shifting of influence, far greater was that which came from the actual growth of commerce and manufactures about the middle of the century. It was then that the foundations were laid upon which the solid wealth of the country has been built. A century and a half before, Scotland had been a miserably poor country. Her currency did not in all amount to a million pounds sterling. Her population scarcely exceeded a million. Her manufactures were insignificant; and she had almost no share in the commerce of the world. Prices were low; but even when we make full allowance for low prices, it is plain that the general standard of living was simple even to the extent of penury. The name of Scotsman was synonymous with that of a needy adventurer, under-fed, starving, and ground down to the mere necessities of life. Step by step the ideas of life advanced; but the growth of luxury was seen only in a few chosen and favoured spots, and the general standard was such as would have been considered mean and sordid by the humblest artisan of the present day. The incomes, not of the minister

and schoolmaster only, but of every grade of professional life, would not have satisfied, at their lowest scale, the humbler clerk of our own day, and even at their highest would not have satisfied the ambition even of the mediocre member of their class according to present ideas. A landlord was rich with £500 a year; a lawyer in the highest practice, after a large part of the eighteenth century had run its course, would have been fully satisfied if his income occasionally touched four figures. Even in the first quarter of the century thrift was so much a necessity that it pervaded all classes; and beyond the aristocratic circle — and that a very small one—which annually gathered in the Scottish metropolis, the general standard of life was cast on a humble scale. It was only as the century ran into its third and fourth decade that commerce on an extended scale began to pervade the larger towns. A century before Glasgow had been a neat and picturesque little town, nestling about the banks of a humble stream navigable only by boats of small draft and scanty tonnage. An attempt had been made to find a port for her growing commerce near the estuary of the Clyde, some twenty miles away. But now the ideas of her citizens took a bolder and a wider scope. They began the dredging of their river, and on either bank the first manufacturing establishments, far different from their present gigantic scale, were gradually gathering. Her shipbuilding yards were beginning to send forth ocean-going steamers—the successors of the first tiny craft which had essayed only a few years before to navigate her waters by steam power. In 1800 the whole shipping of Scotland had amounted to 2415 ships; in 1840 she had 3479. But the difference in the number of ships offers a poor idea of

the growth of her commercial fleet. In the first year the tonnage amounted only to 171,000 tons; in 1840, to 429,000. Already the start had been taken in that race of vigorous energy, which at the close of the century has multiplied that tonnage by six times. Between 1840 and 1850 she took her full share in the vast enterprise of railroad extension, and the shriek of the locomotive was heard in tracts of country which almost within the memory of living men had been the home of an alien race, and had been the scene of wild escapades, read of in old ballads, or told as the half-credited tales of adventurous travellers. The glamour, the romance, the pristine habits that had seemed to carry the imagination back to the Middle Ages had been rudely scattered. The railways in England broke up many a rustic scene, and brought the noise and smoke and bustle of the factory into regions given up to rural quiet; in Scotland they brought the spirit of modern times by one quick bound into the midst of mediævalism. During that decade the great railway companies of the northern country all took their start. It was on a limited scale. The capital that is now more than a hundred millions, could then be counted by the score of millions. But the contrast between 1800 and 1850 was nevertheless far greater than that between 1850 and the closing years of the century. Carry the view backwards for half a century more, and the contrast between 1750 and 1850 is not that between small beginnings and a fair advance; it is that between modern life and all the antique picturesqueness of a primitive community.

So it was with the development of her natural wealth. A century and a half before coal had scarcely been known, and was regarded with a horror and

dislike to which perhaps those who have suffered by its modern devastation may accord a heartfelt, although a resigned, sympathy. In the eighteenth century it had become something of a staple of merchandise, as such staples were then counted. It employed as its servants a great army of human beings who were slaves in the fullest sense, and who lived under conditions which public feeling would not now tolerate in the case of animals. In 1775, as we have already seen, that hereditary bondage had been broken; but down to 1845 a vast system of degraded toil, which crushed the life out of women and young children, was still permitted to stain that civilisation which cloaked its hideousness by the boast of expanding wealth. It was only then that the public conscience was aroused, and aroused far more by English example, and by the perseverance of English philanthropists, than by any purely Scottish impulse. But while it crushed and degraded a large part of the population in its advance, that vast industry, which now takes its place as one of the chief sources of Scottish wealth, was steadily assuming its huge importance. The possibilities were fully realised; it remained to the last half century only to develop these on the lines which the pioneers had discerned.

So it was with the iron industry which now defaces some of what were once the wildest and most picturesque tracts of Scottish scenery, but which has built up in large part the fabric of Scottish wealth. The Carron Works—for long the only important enterprise of the kind—were begun only in 1760. In 1788 they turned out about 1500 tons a year. Step by step the output advanced, until in 1845 it amounted to half a million tons. From that safe platform to the development of the last half century, when the output counts by

millions, was the work only of deliberate endeavour. To make the industry as great as it became in 1845, required enterprise and discernment; to ripen it to the fulness of 1900 required no more than discipline and perseverance.

But these treasures of the soil were not the only mines of wealth which Scotland, once she awakened to the need of taking her place amongst the advancing races of the world in the pursuits which now absorbed all energies, was to work with profit and success. The woollen trade had grown slowly in Scotland—checked for long by the conviction that her interest lay rather in the linen manufacture, and that she could never take her place as the rival of England in the more highly developed woollen manufacture. But before the eighteenth century was half run it had already got a secure footing. The speculations and schemes of one man—David Loch—had done much for the trade by pertinaciously urging improvement in the breed of sheep, chiefly as a means of raising the Highlands from the slough of poverty and starvation to which nature seemed to have condemned them. Here and there in the northern counties his schemes had some success; but it was in the lowlands chiefly that the manufacture advanced with a steady progress. The great Tweed manufactures secured a position and a name for a purely Scottish industry in all the markets of the world; and it is a curious circumstance, as associating the romance and the growing wealth of Scotland, that the technical name of "Tweel," which properly belonged to the cloth, was transformed by a careless clerk to *Tweed*, and then by a happy thought permanently adopted from the fame which the genius of Scott had brought to a comparatively obscure border stream.

It was thought much when the turnover in 1830 amounted to £26,000 in the year. The enterprise that brought that measure of success was a more powerful agent in national development than the perseverance that carried it to a value of millions annually. It was only another phase of that national vigour that was working to such good purpose in the middle of the century.

The foundations of her wealth, and the lines on which it was to advance, were thus being laid on sure lines. What had been petty boroughs grew into vast emporiums. In the eager race for wealth, Scotland lost something that is attractive to history, and that imparted romance and interest to the story of her past. Nothing is more denationalising than wealth, and it was inevitable that some distinctive features of the national character should, with its accumulation, and the monotony of work which it engendered, fade into the past. It was only the indomitable perseverance of the race that seemed to remain as the chief sign of its individuality. But while the century was no more than half run there still lingered some traits of the former generation. Within the memory of those yet living the vernacular still held its own, and the broad Scotch dialect was still to be heard, not in the blurred and degraded form in which it lingers in the streets and amongst the vulgar, but with all its racy and expressive idioms, repeating the pristine forms of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Its retention was most characteristic perhaps of the landed aristocracy; and amongst them some of the strongest and most pervading personalities gave to it the prestige and the dignity of their own habitual practice. In 1845, too, although the standard of comfort was greatly raised, the habit of

thrift still remained, and even amongst the wealthy—if they did not count their wealth by years but by generations—the custom of lavish display was rigorously eschewed. The newly-enriched Midas of the commercial type was not a character who found the mid-century air of Scotland a congenial or sympathetic one. Much comfort, much easy hospitality, abundant dignity of life, and much employment of life's chief external ornaments there were. But they were accompanied by a certain staid and disciplined moderation. They aimed much more at the substantial than the florid accompaniments of wealth. A certain spirit of asceticism curtailed even the harmless graces which good taste might permit to luxury. The character and disposition of the people, the temper and tradition of their religious feeling—even the pride which bade them pitch the measure of display below that of their resources—all these preserved this tendency. To what extent it has since passed away, and how far Scotland is to be congratulated on its disappearance, must be matter for the illustration and comment of any one who may essay the history of the last half of the nineteenth century.

These later years have shown us a curious and, as some think, not altogether a very wholesome symptom. A fashion has arisen, and has been carried to what we may be forgiven for thinking a rather absurd extent, of depicting phases of Scottish manners with an exaggeration of what professes to be indigenous sentiment, and with a lavish use of what is supposed to be Scottish vernacular. The affectation of antiquity is always a little ridiculous, and like the lumber stored in the saleroom of the dealer in antiques is apt to provoke suspicions of its genuineness. The

language in which such depictors of Scottish characteristics drape their narrative may doubtless find its counterpart in one or another corner of a Scottish town, or in some little village clique. But it is certain that it shows no affinity to the classic dialect to which the pages of Burns and Scott have accustomed us, and which greeted our ears as spoken by some master of the pure vernacular, in years that are not so long gone by. It may even be open to doubt whether the patchiness of the language does not infect to some extent the sincerity of that overlaboured sentiment which it has pleased the last decade to identify with all that is most characteristic of the Scottish temperament. But much may be forgiven to the desire to cherish the memory of types which have faded into the past.

Whatever the loss of romance and of interest, there is no gainsaying the advances made by Scotland, at the period when this narrative closes, in material prosperity and in wealth. The middle class benefited enormously by the political changes of the day, and by the new fiscal regulations which gave a new opening to commerce. They acted their part with enterprise and energy, and we must admit that in the tenacity of their adherence to certain opinions, and in the stubborn force with which they defended them, they repeated worthy traditions of a time when Scotland had been represented by a smaller, a more exclusive, and a more privileged class. The lower population increased enormously in number; they had vast opportunities of employment before unknown; and they had their share in the new prosperity, even though we may doubt whether that prosperity added to their substantial comfort, and whether it was not

dearly bought at the price of the strain and pressure of overcrowded cities and of fluctuating trade; and whether the intellectual calibre of the poorer Scotsman had not degenerated to some extent, and was not destined to degenerate still more, from that of his covenanting forebears. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the social transformation did produce one serious loss to Scotland. Edinburgh ceased to be a literary capital. To some extent this was the inevitable consequence of the migration of intellect to the southern metropolis, of which the causes were not far to seek. But the loss was more far-reaching than this. The distinctively Scottish strain almost completely disappeared from literature. Scottish philosophy, in the sense in which it had flourished in the previous century, ceased to be. Her universities continued to be notable and distinguished institutions, but their teachers were drawn to a very large extent from the English universities. Her most eminent professors of philosophy introduced a strain of thought which had far more affinity with the German than with the Scottish type. Her scientific and medical schools were famous and respected, but their representatives no longer stood out as distinctively national products, and the more cosmopolitan spirit drew them more and more across the Scottish border, or supplied their places by those who had received an English training. The dignity of her Court remained, and the exponents of her law occupied no mean position amongst the jurists of the empire; but they no longer swayed the nation as they did only a century before, and the quick growth of statute law inevitably tended to obliterate some of the distinctive marks of Scottish procedure.

One of the most important elements in the making of the Scottish nation had been her parish schools. They represented a national and statutory system which had existed for centuries before such a thing had been thought of in England. The Act which consolidated rather than established the system was that of 1696, which required the heritors of each parish to pay a salary of at least one hundred merks Scots (£5, 11s. 1d.), or not more than two hundred merks, for the schoolmaster. If the heritors failed in this duty, they might be compelled to do so by the Commissioners of Supply of the county, at the instance of the Presbytery of the bounds. The provision was scanty enough, even when eked out by fees (often paid in kind) and by some small parish offices. But the position had its advantages. The teacher was an institution of the country, and had the firm position of a freeholder, buttressed by statute. During the eighteenth century various attempts had been made to raise the income, and a sum of £30 a year was the maximum which it was hoped might be attained. The teachers had a secure tenure, and the value of their work was sufficiently well recognised to enable them to push their claims with considerable force. They remained an ill-paid but none the less a respected class. It was one of the peculiarities of Scottish life that no very wide barrier separated the various grades of professional status. The schoolmaster was often a licentiate of the Church; he was not seldom the assistant of the parish minister, and might himself hope to attain that position. Just in the same way the parish minister might hope to end his days in the much-envied seat of a Scottish professor; and thus each grade felt that it was divided by

no insuperable line from that above it. The schoolmaster entwined himself with the very heart of Scottish life, and formed an inseparable part of it. His horizon was not unduly circumscribed, and in all the concerns of the country, in all its aims, in all the diversity of its social interests, he had his recognised place, and had associated himself even with its poetry and its romance. Under his care the parish school achieved a work which it is hard for any one not acquainted with Scottish life to comprehend. It was a part of a wide-spreading missionary effort, which brought the various parts of the country closer together, and did more than any other agency to redeem from almost savage ignorance, and to bring within the pale of civilisation and of loyalty, the vast tracts of the Highlands, whose inhabitants had for centuries lived an alien life, divided by every diversity of law and custom. It was by the influence of the parish school that the problem of bringing these regions under the sway of the law was far more successfully achieved than by the ruthless cruelty which stamped out the rebellion, and strove to plant southern sway by means of the terror inspired by military despotism and by indiscriminate punishments. It was the parish school that brought together all classes, and accustomed the children of the laird to receive their earliest instruction on the same benches with the tenant's son. It was not confined to the bare elements of education, for poverty did not prevent the teacher from being often a man of culture and of scholarship, and finding his solace and ambition in training the aspirant to the university and professional life. It was the parish school that fitted the young Scotsman with that adaptable equipment that enabled him to take his place with credit in foreign enterprise,

and gave him the rough intelligence that marked him as strongly as his national idiosyncrasies. Its atmosphere was one of independence and of equality, and although its range might be narrower than that of the richly-endowed grammar schools of the south, it was a far better nurse of energy and self-confidence than these sleepy corners which lethargy overspread like mildew. It is hard to exaggerate the debt of Scotland to her parish schools.

With the opening of the new century the need of some increased liberality to a class of such national importance was widely felt. The nation was quickened not by its traditions only, but by the imperious necessities of its situation, to recognise the advantages of education, and to feel that better provision must be made for it. It was in 1803 that a new Act was passed which made three hundred merks Scots (about £16) the minimum, and four hundred merks the maximum salary of the schoolmaster, with a power of revision after every five-and-twenty years, besides insisting upon the provision of a house. But even here the characteristic greed of the landed class was seen. The scanty increase was sorely grudged by them, and it was thought to be an extravagant provision which required that the house should consist of "not more than two apartments including the kitchen," and that there should be attached to it a garden of "at least one-fourth of a Scots acre." But, paltry as the provision was, it gave a new stimulus to the parish school. No investment ever repaid a country better than did the money which a conscience-stricken legislature extorted from the pockets of heritors who were drawing greatly increased rents from a soil which they had often acquired by very questionable means. It preserved all the distinctive

features of the old system—the settled status and the independence which came from the teacher being an established institution of the land.

On this footing the educational system of the country achieved new successes. In the larger towns the Grammar Schools formed centres, which maintained a high standard of education, and which opened their doors at a fee which scarcely debarred the poorest.[1] However grudging to the teachers, the heritors must be allowed the credit of often paying the fees for the poor but promising boy. Education was valued: and it may safely be said that it lay within the reach of every class. No religious difficulty intervened to enhance the difficulties of the work. The division of sects in Scotland did not lead to any difference in the religious creed or formula; and except for the Roman Catholics (whose consciences the General Assembly specially enjoined the teachers to respect), and the scanty handful of Episcopalians, all were content with the same religious teaching. The Church was the close guardian and protectress of the schools, and the school system was part and parcel of the national establishment.

But as population increased the difficulties became greater. The parish system worked ill in the larger towns. The burden of education became too heavy for the heritors, and if it were to cope with advancing needs new resources were imperatively necessary. Scotland had the right to claim, and had full necessity for requiring, a share in that imperial aid for education

[1] Far on in the present century the school fee in the High School of Glasgow, where the sons of the richest citizens received their education, was only 15s. a quarter, or £3 a year. It is fortunate that her sources of income now promise to make the cost almost as moderate for a far wider and more varied curriculum.

which the absence of any national system rendered imperative in England.

It was in 1832 that the first imperial grants were given : scanty in amount, and restricted in their aim. The whole amount entered in the estimates for England and Scotland was only £20,000, and the share that could fall to Scotland was but a trifling help in a great national work. It was to be applied only in assisting in the provision of schools : there was as yet no thought of the co-operation of the State in testing the efficiency of schools or in aiding to maintain that efficiency. The supervision of the schools rested with the Presbytery alone.

By slow steps this imperial aid was extended. In 1839 it had grown to £30,000, and in 1846 the first minutes providing for aid in the maintenance of schools was granted. The State had now intervened at many points. It had helped to build schools; it trained teachers and granted to them certificates of efficiency; and it offered inspection as a condition upon which annual grants might be made. Of the vast consequences which have sprung from these beginnings this is not the place to speak; we have only to trace the effect upon Scottish education to the middle of the century. Only a few years before that date the total annual expenditure upon popular education—including the heritors' compulsory contributions, as well as the scanty dole of the State—was certainly considerably less than £50,000 a year. When the State began its annual grants, the Free Church had just started on its course, and after some slight hesitation about entering into a new concordat with the State, that Church resolved to accept the grants now offered, and with their aid to establish

schools of her own which would divide the ground with the parish schools where the Established Church reigned supreme. A large addition was thus made to the nominal school provision of the country; but it may be questioned whether its supply was not dictated rather by motives of ecclesiastical rivalry than by strict attention to the necessities of each locality. The chief difficulty lay in the wide-stretching tracts of the Highlands, where a single parish school was often the only supply for a parish which might be forty miles long. Even within the present century it was calculated that in Argyleshire alone there were 26,000 children out of a total of 27,600 who were beyond the reach of a parish school. Sectarian zeal could find little to attract it in such a region; and indeed to cope with such a difficulty was beyond the power of a sect that had to trust to the somewhat doubtful resources of voluntary supply. The Church made what efforts it could, and with something of missionary zeal endeavoured to supplement the statutory supply. By an Act of 1839 provision was made for side schools where the parish school was manifestly below the requirements of the district; but in spite of such timid additions to the statutory duty the arrears of the task of national education were not overtaken. In the larger towns also the parish school was obviously insufficient. The only additional provision came from the sessional schools, established by the voluntary effort of different congregations. Where such effort was stimulated by the vigour of an active incumbent, and was wisely directed, it achieved much; but the requirements increased in much more rapid proportion than the voluntary efforts. Had it not been for the help of the State the work would have been well-nigh

hopeless. But none the less Scotland clung to her parish schools system, and for many years after the grants for maintenance were introduced, her jealousy of any interference with that system was proved by the fact that grants were not claimed for many of the parish schools. The parochial schoolmaster preferred his independence and grinding poverty rather than an enhanced income, gained at the expense of Government inspection and what appeared a harassing and troublesome interference with his work. Fifteen years after the grants in aid were established by the Minutes of 1846, the Scottish parish school system obtained a new extension by the Act of 1861; and in 1862 Scotland successfully resisted what it held to be the galling fetters of Mr. Lowe's Revised Code, which weighed educational effort by an elaborately adjusted scheme of payment upon individual results; and down to the Education Act of 1872, which swept away the whole parish school system, much of Scottish education, in spite of all pecuniary temptations, had retained its independence of all State control. In England State aid came first; a statutory system only followed a generation later, in order to force localities to do their duty and to organise the system. In Scotland the statutory system was the inheritance of generations, and existed long before the State paid one penny of the cost. The tempting bait of State assistance did not suffice for a whole generation to bring that statutory system within State control, or to induce Scotland to relinquish her independence. It was only when the task became too great for local effort, and when the supremacy of the Church in the parish school was assailed by the claims of rival sects, and by the current of the prevailing political opinion,

that the parish school system was swept away. But it did not pass until it had impressed itself powerfully, not on history only, but on the national character of Scotland; and even a new educational system, resting upon different foundations, guided by different forces, kept alive by different resources, must hope for much of its success by retaining some features of the parish school system, and carefully adjusting these as far as possible to the needs of a changed society. The educational history of the last half century is typical of the general progress of Scotland during the same period in many other features. Before the middle of the century the germs of national effort were at work. But it was the day of small things. In 1840 Scotland was still a poor country. The whole of her educational expenditure must have been, as we have said, well within £50,000 a year; at the close of the century that annual expenditure is considerably above the capital sum of which £50,000 represents the annual interest. During the intervening sixty years there has been spent on education in Scotland a sum of certainly not less than forty millions.

We have thus followed the history of Scotland from the period when she was first joined by legislative union with England, and when there still lay before her the last struggle of a decayed system against the forces of modern constitutionalism, down to a period within the memory of those now living. We have seen how, if much of the stress and strain which she had to endure was the inheritance of her own stormy history, it was also, in no small degree, the result of the heedless injustice, the careless apathy, and the purblind neglect of successive English governments. We have

seen how, out of varied and often antagonistic elements, she managed to form and to preserve a very strong and vivid sense of nationality, which was not lessened, but distinctly increased and fostered, by the Jacobite movement—a movement which became stronger in Scotland just as it faded away in England. We have seen how she provoked the jealousy of, and met with indifference and contempt an almost insane outburst of abuse from, her southern neighbour. We have seen how, preserving much that was most picturesque and romantic in her national traditions, she shook herself free from the trammels and bondage of mediævalism, and achieved notable results in thought and literature, which gave her a proud place not only in the Empire, but abroad. We have seen how she helped to consolidate and strengthen the Empire, and how she bore her part in the most critical struggle which that Empire has yet seen. We have seen how her enterprise developed and how she became absorbed in the eager competition for wealth. We have watched how the older and more exclusive forces gradually grew more weak, and how Scotland took her part in the great Reform movements which changed the face of society. We have seen a new class gaining political supremacy, and holding with a tenacity distinctive of the nation to the new opinions which they had come to form, and clinging to them as sternly as to a religion or an ethical code. We have seen how these convictions were clinched by the fierceness of a great ecclesiastical struggle, the bitter memories of which very slowly passed away. During that struggle a close alliance was struck between religious opinions which were opposed to the dominant latitudinarianism of the previous century, and the middle class which had

thriven on commercial prosperity, and had no sympathy with the older social traditions. Only as the century closes has the stubbornness of these convictions relaxed, and a great change of political principle taken place. Its weight and its meaning will be differently explained by different men. To trace its causes, and to estimate its results, must be the business of another generation.

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